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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

COLLECTIVE KITCHENS: KNOWLEDGE, FORMATS, AND ISSUES

BY

NORA LILIAN FERNANDEZ

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

IN

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1996

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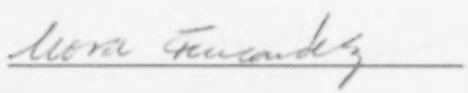

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Collective Kitchens: Knowledge, Formats and Issues" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Family Life Education.

Dr. Maryanne Doherty Poirier
Supervisor

Dr. Diane Kieren

Dr. Pat Rafferty

April 22, 1996.

Dedication

To my mother, Nora Moreno Chiazzaro de Martinez, who taught me, who with me learned and who is always by my side despite the geographical distance that separates us.

"siempre hay una causa digna
de la gloria y de la suerte
de la suerte y de la muerte
siempre hay una causa digna

pero no es la lucha vana
de quien busca satanases
en las guerras y en las paces
de la vida cotidiana

hay por ultimo un letargo
de la gloria y de la suerte
de la suerte y de la muerte
hay todo eso y sin embargo

en la noche veterana
el amor que es buena gente
va dejando la simiente
de otra vida cotidiana."

(Cotidiana 5, Mario Benedetti).

Abstract

Collective Kitchens are groups of women that prepare food together, distribute it to be frozen and used later. Collective Kitchens have the potential to be the starting point for building communities. Despite the strength of the Collective Kitchens phenomena, little opportunity has been provided for participants in Collective Kitchens to share their experiences. The knowledge and experiences of participants needs to be integrated with the literature to increase our understanding about Collective Kitchens.

This study provided a group of Latin American women with the opportunity to share their experiences. The data, collected from interviews with collaborators and analysis of documents, was enriched by the application of an ecological framework. Data analysis included: level one analysis of collaborators' emergent thematic areas, themes and sub themes and level two analysis of emergent formats of Collective Kitchens. Formats were integrated with knowledge paradigms from education literature. Emergent issues were discussed and recommendations made.

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Special thanks are extended to the collaborators in this study; Adelaida, Dalila, Magenta, Marina and Marita shared with me their feelings openly and candidly. The valuable contribution of Maria is particularly acknowledged. The information shared with me by Johanne, from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec, and the documents provided by Carmen and Rebekha, from CUSO, are acknowledged and appreciated.

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Chapter One

Introduction

> "The Collective Kitchens came into being because... How are you going to feed people who do not have enough money?" Diane Norman (NFB, 1994).
>
> "But a lot of the country and the provinces realized how the social fabric was disintegrating. The Collective Kitchens are a starting point to rebuild it"(Talbot, 1995).
>
> "Stir It Up is a documentary about, collective kitchens, a grassroots movement that nourishes the body and the spirit. It is a story of dignity in hard times and a testament to the possibilities of cooperative living. (Regroupment des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994).

People have many ideas about Collective Kitchens, as illustrated in the above quotes. Few people may disagree with the prevalent definition of Collective Kitchens as groups of people who pool their money, time, energy and skills to make economical, healthy meals for themselves and their families (EBH, 1992). However, some may disagree when the purpose of Collective Kitchens is discussed or when what Collective Kitchens are about is described. Collective Kitchens may be understood as either a program or a method; that is, to serve as means to an end such as helping people provide non-expensive food for themselves and their families. They may be understood as a process aiming at self determination, cherishing community autonomy, or building community. Finally Collective Kitchens may be understood as a grassroots movement with emancipation and empowerment as goals while attending to people's physical and spiritual needs (Campfens, Machan & Murphy, 1992).

Collective Kitchens are connected with *Comedores Populares* of Peru, which is a subsistence organization that deals with food issues. Many *Comedores Populares* address the nutritional needs of participating women and their families while being

very active in the popular neighbourhoods of Lima. Often *Comedores Populares* are not limited to making food available to their members but they attend to other needs as well. They have potential for becoming popular organizations as well as an instrument of social change. *Comedores Populares* have inspired Collective Kitchens.

The original Collective Kitchen Project in Canada was developed in 1986 by Diane Norman in Montreal, Quebec. Since that time Collective Kitchens have become increasingly popular. In 1992, the Collective Kitchens Handbook, a practical guide for implementing Collective Kitchens, was published. It became an important resource to those who were interested in sponsoring Collective Kitchens (EBH, 1992). In 1994, the documentary entitled "Stir it Up," was made. This documentary shows Collective Kitchens working in four different parts of Canada. It includes participants' and sponsors' testimonials along with testimonials from the people involved in the creation of the original Collective Kitchen Project and in the promotion of Collective Kitchens in Canada.

The Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec was born in 1991 after a series of meetings among the sponsors of the different Collective Kitchens in Quebec. The Coalition's mission is to promote and bring together Collective Kitchens from throughout Quebec to increase their visibility and credibility as agents of change. The Coalition is a non-profit organization and it has numerous members. The majority of Quebec's Collective Kitchens are Coalition members. The Coalition maintains regular contact with members and with other Quebec based organizations. It is heavily involved in the promotion of Collective Kitchens. In addition, it is involved in an action research project with the Universities of Laval and Montreal (Regroupment des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994).

Collective Kitchens have been set up in communities outside of Quebec across Canada. Their focus remains on food preparation as revealed by the related

documents that are used by organizers. Collective Kitchens in Canada are fulfilling a role that Eichler (1988) notes was generally fulfilled within families. Because of the purpose of Collective Kitchens and the strong link between food issues and families, Collective Kitchens can be understood as family life education in a community setting. Furthermore, there is a strong educational focus on information and skill development related to the preparation of non-expensive food (EBH, 1992).

Recently, family life educators have reflected upon philosophy and delivery methods with the purpose of developing more meaningful interventions for participants. One researcher, Morgaine (1992b) argues that the appropriate integration of Technical/Instrumental, Situational/Interpretive, and Critical/ Emancipatory paradigms in family life education will result in more meaningful educational experiences. Since Collective Kitchens are an example of family life education, the argument could also be made that Collective Kitchens could provide a more powerful educational experience for participants by appropriately integrating all three approaches.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of Collective Kitchens by listening to and documenting the voices of the women who had participated in Collective Kitchens and who volunteered to collaborate with the researcher in this study. The interpretive approach ensures that the concerns of participants in Collective Kitchens are represented through the voice of collaborators. Collective Kitchens have potential. Information from participants is relevant to ensure that Collective Kitchens reach their potential. Furthermore, valuable insights about Collective Kitchens, expressed in terms of the common and distinct experiences that collaborators described, can increase the understanding that participants, coordinators and sponsors have of Collective Kitchens.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Collective Kitchens are connected with *Comedores Populares* of Peru through historical roots and a common concern with food issues. The Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec is an organization of individual Collective Kitchen groups that has maintained contact with Collective Kitchen groups over Canada. The handbook entitled, "Collective Kitchens Handbook," and the video entitled, "Stir it Up," are documents that have been referred to by the Coalition of Collective Kitchens; in addition to, virtually all individual Collective Kitchens in Canada.

In this research, Collective Kitchens are studied through the information provided by the collaborators who participated in the study as well as through an analysis of documents mentioned in the previous paragraph. A Collective Kitchen is a group of three or four people, generally women, who together plan, shop, prepare and distribute among themselves the food they make for themselves and their families. Generally the group cooks for 12 people and the food is taken home and frozen to be used when it is most needed. Participants meet in facilities provided by the sponsors. In this study, participants met at Casa Celeste, which is a non-profit organization located in a low income neighbourhood of a large size western Canadian city.

Thus, this study was designed and completed to answer the question "How are Collective Kitchens experienced by collaborators including key informants?" From this fundamental question, four other questions emerged. They were:

1. What are the common themes collaborators discussed regarding their experiences within Collective Kitchens?
2. What are the distinct themes collaborators discussed regarding their experiences within Collective Kitchens?
3. What formats of Collective Kitchens can be identified?
4. What are the most relevant issues related to Collective Kitchens?

My Research Interests

This study represents the convergence of my curiosity concerning the phenomenon of "Collective Kitchens" in Canada, of my commitment to focus my work on the experiences of immigrant women from Latin America and of my interest with program planning, implementation and evaluation. I learned from my experience in trying to understand Collective Kitchens that situations in life are always complex and challenging. Much is assumed, or taken for granted, in human interactions. If everyday situations are not reflected upon, we may be encouraged to favour an unproblematic view of life that tends to overlook contradictions and encourage unreflected action.

The search for increased understanding of the phenomenon "Collective Kitchens," encouraged me to become informed about *Comedores Populares*, as they inspired Collective Kitchens, about Collective Kitchens themselves as well as about community development. Generally, Collective Kitchens are described as community development alternatives. I was also encouraged to become more knowledgeable about participatory education since it is the community development approach favoured by the organization sponsoring the Collective Kitchen that was studied in this research. In conclusion, my awareness about forms of knowledge helped me to realize their relevance to Collective Kitchens and include a discussion of them within the literature reviewed.

Interviews with collaborators including key informants compelled me to question and reflect on issues connected with their experiences and personal insights related to Collective Kitchens. The analysis of documents, specifically of the documentary entitled "Stir It Up," increased my awareness and understanding of Collective Kitchens. Upon continual reflection, three formats from the educational literature which related to Collective Kitchens emerged. Applying the formats to

Collective Kitchens added a further contribution to the general understanding of Collective Kitchens.

The formats are not intended as models for Collective Kitchens, nor are they to be used in classifying Collective Kitchens nor in categorizing participants' experiences with Collective Kitchens. Furthermore, the emergent formats are not general representations of specific Collective Kitchens. The formats emerged from the researcher's mind after reflection, document analysis, and analysis of the collaborators' comments. The formats are presented and discussed because they could be helpful in identifying common concerns from participants, sponsors and/or facilitators as well as in discussing the potential of Collective Kitchens.

Real life Collective Kitchens are variable and complex; they do not fit single models nor common formats. The formats developed here could be considered valuable only if they help Collective Kitchens reach their implicit potential. They may encourage sponsors, facilitators and/or participants to identify latent concerns or establish connections among their personal experiences with Collective Kitchens and information within the literature. Formats are developed from forms of knowledge and are discussed in relation to educational experiences. They should be considered within the context of Collective Kitchens.

The formats discussed here can contribute to the exploration of ideals about what is with what should be. In other words, awareness about the forms of knowledge, in the context of Collective Kitchen formats can increase understanding about "everyday Collective Kitchens" as experienced by participants. This awareness can also encourage the development of Collective Kitchens' potential or a move toward what Collective Kitchens should be.

A Reflection

> "Blessed are those who do everything possible and furthermore dare to try to bring about some part of the impossible" (Boff, 1995, p. 5).

It has always been difficult to be human, because it has always been difficult to be authentic, to be committed to what is perceived, to what is felt, to what is understood as correct. An ecological view promotes wholeness and awareness about connections in our struggle for a more just, meaningful, caring, humane world. Josue de Castro, the Brazilian Noble prize winner, rightly said: "Poverty is our main environmental problem." If we look carefully we will find that at the root of environmental imbalances is the reproduction of hierarchy and oppression; both have been perceived as viable, lately even as desirable, guiding metaphors for human society. New metaphors for the pursuit of human dreams are needed!

Memory tells me that my awakening started at the age of ten; I discovered then that the world was a challenging place filled with intelligent people full of dreams. At that age I transferred from a private to a public school in Montevideo, the city where I was born. It was the sixties, and the days of political upheaval. I found myself in a class of very opinionated, political ten and eleven year olds. My classmates argued about issues I did not dream existed in political debates I never again witnessed among adults. These young people were tenaciously searching for ways to improve the world.

They were highly critical of what they called the "system". They opposed authority, questioned control and were creatively involved in designing their own ways of government. I was astonished: Could this be possible? Could this be done? Deep inside, however, I was scared. I had the feeling that something prohibited was happening. It changed my life; but, it did not occur by chance. It was possible because of the guidance of *Maria de las Nieves De Sere*, our teacher! The first facilitator of change I ever met and who I will always remember.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Four areas of literature pertinent to this study are reviewed. First, the historical roots of Collective Kitchens, or the link to *Comedores Populares* of Peru, is presented. Then, Collective Kitchens are discussed as they appear within related documents, including the documentary entitled "Stir it Up," the Collective Kitchens Handbook, and materials from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec. Finally, a brief history of Collective Kitchens at Casa Celeste is presented. It was obtained from a document that was published by the organization itself and describes the organization's philosophy and history.

Secondly, the literature related to community development is reviewed because it is documented in Casa Celeste's materials as part of its philosophy. Community development is also congruent with the philosophy of Collective Kitchens, as discussed by a sponsor in the documentary entitled "Stir it Up." Participatory education appears in this literature review as well because it is the specific approach of community development that is favoured within Casa Celeste.

Lastly, a review of the literature about the forms of knowledge from the disciplines of education and family life education is included. Because the purpose and delivery outlined for Collective Kitchens have a strong educational focus, the forms of knowledge add value for planning and implementing Collective Kitchens in order to provide the fullest experience for participants.

Comedores Populares of Peru

Comedores Populares are connected to native community and solidarity expressions among workers as well as to the Mother's Clubs of Peru. *Comedores Populares* are a relative new form of popular movement or organization in Latin America. *Comedores Populares San Juan de Lurigancho* provide an example,

information was obtained from transcripts of a documentary that has valuable information about them.

Historical review

The People's Kitchens or *Comedores Populares* in Lima have more than one historical root. The *olla comun* (common pot) was commonly prepared during *fiestas* and in community work projects; it was promoted in native communities in the country side. The *olla comun* is also traditional among striking workers in mines and factories, particularly when families accompany the workers on their walks, or *marchas de sacrificio,* to confront government officials with their demands and to increase awareness about their issues in other sectors of the population. In recent decades, strikes by fishermen, miners, workers in general, school teachers, and other public servants have given rise to the *olla comun* in many places in Latin America (Andreas, 1989).

Another antecedent of *Comedores Populares* is found in the Mothers' Clubs established by the government and the Catholic Church to use surplus commodities from the United States. Some of these clubs started in the 1950s and the 1960s to gain the political support of women and to defuse a very conflictual climate. They often established, however, a relationship of "welfare clientelism" perceived as negative. These programs encouraged women's participation with individual allotments of basic food supplies, such as cooking oil and flour, or with items, such as nylon hose, plastic kitchenware and sewing supplies. However, in the 1970s some Mothers' Clubs escaped the bounds of welfare clientelism and became centers for grassroots organizing efforts that were aided by progressive nuns who were part of the Popular Church movement and of feminism (Andreas, 1989).

The first *Comedores Populares* were born in the Comas neighbourhood of Lima in 1979. Some women were able to use food allotments collectively. These allotments were provided by Caritas, a Catholic relief agency, despite the

prohibition of some church officials to do so. In the beginning, the program operated from individual homes, and families donated big cooking pots and other supplies while women prepared meals for each neighbourhood on the basis of rotating labor. The *socios,* partners or members of the program, came by to receive prepared food and carry it home. In the beginning, only breakfasts were prepared but later the members pooled resources to buy fruits, vegetables, meat and rice so the women could cook the equivalent of dinner, which in Latin America it is served as a midday meal (Andreas, 1989).

> "Weekly meetings of those responsible for the planning, shopping, and cooking for People's Kitchens, and less frequent meetings of the entire membership, determined how much labor and/or money participants owed and on what basis free food and other assistance could be provided to the elderly, orphans, or others who couldn't contribute to the program for whatever reason. As the program expanded at the city-wide level, those who planned menus were required to attend seminars in nutrition given by local health professionals. Savings were also effected, where possible, by organizing almacenes or food warehouses so that extra costs due to price speculation by individual businesses or market vendors could be avoided" (Andreas, 1989, p. 15).

In most cases, leaders of the *Comedores Populares* brought to these organizations years of neighbourhood organizing experience and some political sophistication but many of the members were very shy about speaking at meetings, taking initiative or responsibility. Over the years, however, many such women experienced noticeable personal transformations thanks to their participation in these organizations. For example, they became outspoken, confident and often highly critical of those who used or intended to use *Comedores* for their personal profit or to manipulate the need of the community to promote outside interests (Andreas, 1989).

Comedores Populares that are not subservient to the government helped achieve the success of the organization. Food assistance from the Church and/or the government, however, was cut off whenever *Comedores* showed solidarity with

other causes. This happened, for example, when they sheltered refugees or organized rallies to make demands on the government. The growth of solidarity with other groups is connected to the radicalization of many members. Political parties of the left attempted to win support among members of *Comedores* through intense political debates about the function of the organization beyond the provision of low cost food for socios and their families. These debates helped the development of *Comedores* and encouraged political analysis (Andreas, 1989).

Nevertheless, by 1987 *Comedores* were experiencing a leadership crisis because centralization of the movement resulted in disputes over who were the legitimate representatives of the coordinating bodies. Some active participants were accused of being members of the "Shining Path" guerrilla movement doing political work within the organization while others were accused of being conciliatory with the party in power. At times government involvement was low but by 1989 a new National Program for Food Assistance was implemented and the electoral politics of 1989 turned many *Comedores Populares* into centers for the organization of conservative forces (Andreas, 1989).

What remains important, is that *Comedores* are a form of expressive popular social activities intent in addressing one aspect of a multiple and complex oppressive situation. Participation is direct. The poor, mainly women, work at asserting their subjective interpretation of social reality and claiming their right to act as subjects in a social transformation activity that is needs-oriented, self-reliant and self-managed, although external financial assistance is required. Such movements may not be an immediate solution to bring about a more just economic and social order but they can lay the social foundations for subsequent formal, political and structural transformations. It is the beginning of an alternative that moves beyond the concern of development planners, with the minimum requirements of family and private consumption of goods and services, to include issues such as quality of life, freedom

of expression, solidarity, and a general sense of well being of people (Campfens, 1988a, 1989, 1990).

Popular organizations and movements

During the 1970s and 1980s Latin Americans witnessed massive social mobilizations, struggles and insurrections of organized groups of the population in the political realm. They took different modalities, from the national and regional strikes in Peru, the civic work stoppages in Colombia, the miners' mobilizations in Bolivia, to the guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Nicaragua. From the 1970s, the idea of popular movements started to replace the idea of social classes across Latin America. This was mainly a response to changes experienced in the region and the world. Nevertheless, the idea of social processes as involving social actors remained crucial (Ballon, 1992).

In the 1980s, two new orientations of popular organizations emerged: movements searching for a vindication in the symbolic expressive terrain, concerned with what can be called quality of life issues, and movements concerned with the decline in living conditions. Feminist movements belong to the first group, as well as sub regional identities movements like the ones of Andean region and movements related to the issue of human rights in countries such as Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. All these movements were deeply concerned with the democratization of daily life. *Comedores Populares*, a movement that in Lima alone was able to count with the participation in rallies of 100,000 women, belongs to the second group; that is, to movements concerned with addressing the decline in living conditions.

Movements such as *Comedores Populares* often raise concerns because the very logic of their existence is an expression of the lack of organization of some sectors of the population. For example, this type of movement is linked to the severity of social stratification, the segmentation of the employment market, the growth of the informal sector everywhere, and the increase in inequalities (Ballon, 1992). The

new modalities expressing the obsolescence of previous forms of organizing, are a clue to the challenges the population face and the level of reigning oppression.

However, there was enthusiasm evident at the women's development centers that emerged in the 1980s as a result of the financial support of international development agencies. These centers came to play a significant role because of the critical state of the economy. The general economic decline has seriously affected the economic condition of women, who in Latin America have been relegated to an inferior status vis-a-vis men in both home and country. Inequality is not just the result of a patriarchal structure and ideology, however, but also of increasing poverty (Campfens, 1990, 1994). For example, women of the growing popular sectors, or shanty towns, are strongly affected by both poverty and inequality.

> "For all its research papers...and fine rhetoric about the value of women's work, the (World) Bank projects have failed to transfer resources to women that would improve their lives...Worse still, macroeconomics policies promoting growth...exacerbate women's heavy workload and perpetuate the feminization of poverty" (Khoury, 1994, p. 123).

As a response to poverty, new forms of organizing emerged. The new popular urban movements, such as *Comedores Populares,* represented a new collective form of action by shanty town dwellers who were making collective claims that ranged from the elementary right to live to the creation of their own social and cultural milieu. It is a new form of struggle that rejected the idea of people being forced to live under unacceptable conditions and subjected to an international division of labour arising from the accumulation of capital and macro development policies (Campfens, 1989).

Mothers from the Mother's Clubs joined forces to collectively purchase, prepare and distribute food. These clubs reached their peak in 1986 and there were about 900 of them in Lima. Women's Clubs, that emphasized the "womanhood"

rather than the "motherhood" of their membership, evolved from the original clubs. For example, the Women's Clubs stressed organizing for the conscious and full participation of women asserting their rights as individuals. This was a new phenomenon originated within the Women's Clubs.

Some of these clubs operate *Comedores Populares* and other organizations, which are not a mere vehicle for state intervention (Campfens, 1990). Novel Popular Women's Organizations (PWO) emerged at the same time that economic crisis swept Latin America. These organizations address women's needs and rights to become autonomous persons as well as rights to help them gain critical knowledge and experience in social and political action (Campfens, 1989; Cuba & Vattuone, 1994).

An example of *Comedores Populares* is the San Juan de Lurigancho's union. It will be discussed with excerpts from a documentary made by them in the image of *Comedores Populares*.

The San Juan de Lurigancho Comedores Populares Union

Women described their personal challenges and their commitment in the creation and maintenance of *Comedores Populares*. The process is explained in a documentary format produced by Incafam, the organization that sponsors them. At first, there were only scattered *Comedores* in different districts thanks to the financial support of NGOs such as Tacif, Caritas and Incafam. Members gradually learned about each other and began working together until they formed the *San Juan de Lurigancho' s Union* in 1986. The goals of *Comedores Populares* is described as follows:

> "But were Collective Kitchens,[1] only formed to ensure access to less expensive services? No way. We organized to advance in other areas as well, such as health, training, production workshops, etc. In short, to fight for better living conditions overall" (Incafam, 1993, p. 2).

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[1]The English translation of the term Comedores Populares throughout the transcripts is Collective Kitchens, even if not very accurate.

At the same time that the *Union* was involved in the above mentioned activities it continued fighting to have *Comedores Populares'* rights recognized and continued sending representatives to larger organized bodies, such as the National Commission of *Comedores Populares,* to propose alternatives to the Peruvian crisis of 1989. The effects of the government policy package of August 1990, which was part of the economic restructuring to which the government committed itself, were drastic. Overnight, the number of poor increased from 7,5 to 12,5 million. Everywhere groups of neighbours started to pool resources and prepare food together, following communitarian traditions of centuries. Within *Comedores* the impact was also strong:

> "When Fujimori (Peru's president) increased all the prices, overnight we were left without any money. We had to cook peas one day and lentils the next in order to come up with enough money to go shopping with" (Incafam, 1993, p. 3).

At that time the *Union* joined other grassroots organizations, business and government agencies under the Social Emergency Program. This title was given to a group of measures taken by the government to somehow alleviate the consequences of the drastic economic restructuring that had been applied. Women were shouldering the greatest workload but also showing their organizing abilities, solidarity and sharing. The government, however, showed little commitment to its own plan and soon abandoned it. The *Union* struggled to have formal recognition or legal existence; a law on grassroots organizations was approved in 1990.

> "Experience has shown us that services provided by a minister or a mayor only exist for as long as the minister or the mayor is in office...Whereas in an organization, no matter how often the people in charge change, projects keep going" (Incafam, 1993, p. 4).

Incafam, a NGO born in 1984, has collaborated with the *Union of Comedores Populares San Juan de Lurigancho.* Incafam's objectives are: researching the situation of women and families in Peru, promoting projects of development for a better quality of life for women, contributing to the formulation of alternatives for the

increased participation of women in decision-making and developing methodological tools and materials for work with women. Some of Incafam's assumptions are: that the structural crisis in Peru increased the already stressful socioeconomic and political situation, and the visible manifestations are increased poverty, social and political violence, and inequality, as well as loss of legitimacy of the State and of its institutions (Incafam, 1994).

Incafam's philosophy includes: validation of organized urban women as subjects of analysis and praxis, implementation of self-financed projects and of businesses directed by women and youth, and promotion of women's and youth's education about the sociopolitical, socioeconomic and psychosocial dimensions of their lives. All of the above maintaining relationships that are respectful of cultural differences and follow a critical mode regarding gender, ethnicity and class. Incafam's philosophy encourages the questioning of the traditional role of women departing from women's everyday practice, to develop a strategy that modifies women's subordination and builds a more egalitarian society without denigrating women's role (Cuba & Vattuone, 1994; Incafam, 1994).

Collective Kitchens in Canada

Collective Kitchens are an idea borrowed from Latin America, primarily from the *Comedores Populares* of Peru. There are important differences, however, between the two. For example, *Comedores Populares* started 15 years ago and are highly organized. They have gardens with enormous kitchens and a participation level that has permitted the organization to successfully lobby against price increases of basic food products, such as milk. Some Peruvian organizers of the *Comedores Populares* became well known leaders, such is the case of Maria Elena Moyano who was also the president of the women's movement. Furthermore, Moyano became a symbol of struggle and courage for shanty town dwellers in Peru particularly after she

was assassinated. Louise Garnier referred to Moyano, in Stir It Up (NFB, 1994), in the following manner:

> "She was assassinated because...Maybe because she spoke too openly about injustices..." (NFB, 1994).

Collective Kitchens are defined by the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992) as follows:

> "A collective kitchen is a group of people who cook together. They make 5 healthy meals each month. The group members choose the recipes, go shopping and cook the meals. Everyone helps out. Each group cooks for 12 people. That is called "12 mouth to feed." Members pay a few dollars each month. They pay for each person in their family. Members can be in a collective kitchen as long as they want. Some members stay for 6 months, and some stay much longer. When someone decides to leave, a new member joins the group" (EBH, 1992, p. 1)

Collective Kitchens are diverse. Each city, according to Jan McBean, from the Edmonton Board of Health, implements kitchens slightly differently. In her view, this is appropriate because cities are made up of different people and situations. In some areas Collective Kitchens are subsidized by a sponsor while in other areas, such as in Waterloo, Ontario, they run without subsidy (NFB, 1994). Despite diversity, most Collective Kitchens use the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992), a practical guide for setting up and operating Collective Kitchens, as a resource.

Most major Canadian cities have Collective Kitchens. Some of their guiding principles are discussed in the Collective Kitchens Handbook. For example, participants learn by doing, in a fun atmosphere, working within a budget. They plan, shop and prepare the food, usually up to five meals each month. The food is the tangible evidence of their efforts. They take it home and can freeze it to use it at the end of the month, when it is most needed by participants who face financial difficulties. The food that is prepared is both inexpensive and nutritious (EBH, 1992).

The budget, or money to buy foodstuffs, is generally provided by participants with a subsidy from sponsors. Sponsors may pay half of the costs and they generally

also provide main staples. They generally provide the location where the Collective Kitchen groups operate. The subsidy is particularly important for participants who are from low income backgrounds and sponsors, often recruit them from their neighbourhoods. Contacts for low income participants may also come from local social services agencies, public health nurses or other community groups (EBH, 1992).

Although some turnover is expected, most participants join Collective Kitchens for at least six months but they can remain longer if they wish. Each sponsoring group designates a coordinator, who is generally a volunteer with people skills and experience in food preparation. The coordinator facilitates Collective Kitchens, makes available the subsidy money to participants, and collects receipts of expenses. The coordinator is responsible for creating and maintaining a friendly, non-judgmental atmosphere, and for involving participants in the decisions made in the Kitchens (EBH, 1992).

The approach suggested for Collective Kitchens is learner centred. It recognizes that people have knowledge, skills and resources to share with one another and that those resources are generally shared when participants are encouraged to do so. The overall program coordinator is a nutritionist from the Edmonton Board of Health, or from an equivalent authority in other cities. She/he is also the main resource person for the Collective Kitchen coordinator and for the group (EBH, 1992).

Collective Kitchens became popular because obtaining adequate and inexpensive food became an issue for a growing number of Canadians over the 80s (Olson, 1992). Collective Kitchens, are connected to these issues because they are often perceived as a more dignified alternative for those who are unable to manage financially during difficult times. Food banks are questioned although more people rely on them because the money provided by social assistance programs is not sufficient (Olson, 1992). The number of people who live on the streets as well as

the number of people relying on emergency programs have grown (John Howard Society, 1995; Olson, 1992). Diane Norman referred to the issue of need for food as follows:

> "The Collective Kitchens came into being because...How are you going to feed people who do not have enough money?...Eliminating hunger is really the cornerstone of a better world. One in which we could live with each other in peace and harmony. And I think that the Kitchens contribute to that kind of world" (NFB, 1994)

In Louise Garnier's view (NFB, 1994) Collective Kitchens have developed because they meet people's needs well. The price of food is high and many people are unable to feed themselves and their families on either low income or social assistance. Often, she argued, our perception of being an industrialized country has prevented us from realizing that many people in Canada do not meet their basic nutritional needs. As she said: "We are not supposed to know hunger and still we know hunger" (NFB, 1994).

The profile of the poor is also changing. For example, Peter Holmes, from the First Baptist Church of Toronto, noted that more middle class people, professionals and people with university and college education as well as two parent families, are experiencing financial problems and thus taking part in the Collective Kitchens sponsored by their organization (NFB, 1994). Participating in Collective Kitchens does not have a stigma because underlying them is the idea that people are not at fault. The current recession brought challenges unparalleled since the Great Depression not only to people but also to agencies dealing with poverty. People suffer the ups and downs of an economy which is undergoing a radical restructuring with devastating effects on people's lives (NFB, 1994). A participant in Collective Kitchens explains her situation as follows:

> "I used to have a photography business of my own and I was running it and got further in debt, further in debt, and eventually I had to give it up. And my husband...He was working at the time, then he got laid off and had unemployment insurance. I don't know if for six or eight months. When that

> run out we had to go on social services. Middle class going to live on welfare, you know...(NFB, 1994).

When issues related to the economy are considered, it becomes evident that a growing number of people are experiencing financial difficulties for reasons beyond their control. Important changes in the labour market in Canada, such as the decline in the number of middle income jobs, growth in part-time employment and consistently high levels of unemployment have been documented (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990; Kieren, 1994; Riches, 1987). Despite the current conditions, people exhibit a high degree of resilience and continue to try to find ways of overcoming their difficulties. Johanne McMillan referred to this quality of people in the following manner:

> "We scrimp everywhere in order to save money to make something and despite everything groups continue to multiply. They function and develop in different ways, with different qualities. I think this is our particularity. We are, I could say, very much fighters. We keep going with very little" (NFB, 1994).

Some alternatives, however, make people feel ashamed of themselves. Perceptions that the poor are at fault contribute to blaming people for their difficulties. For example, vouchers may contribute to shame and stigmatizing.

> "Sometimes when we used a food voucher at the store, some people in line behind you are like...Sort of going like that (gesture) and you feel embarrassed! You do, you feel embarrassed that you have to use the food vouchers" (NFB, 1994).

Sean Strickland, coordinator at Waterloo Food Bank, noted that food banks are not a solution to poverty. Collective Kitchens, however, as a community development initiative can work side by side with other community development initiatives such as community gardens and offer alternatives to, what Strickland calls, the "bread line" of food banks (NFB, 1994).

In Canada there are political issues in relation to Collective Kitchens and a diversity of expectations about them. Probably because the collective aspects of the Kitchens have the potential for encouraging participants to become aware of

their common situations, or about connections between their personal situations, such as personally experienced inequality, and larger issues related to structural injustice. Political issues are a concern; Johanne McMillan referred to the potential of Collective Kitchens for encouraging political awareness in the following:

> "I feel the Collective Kitchen groups, yes, are political. Because for me, my definition of something which is political is: as soon as there is a sort of, that the people get conscious about their needs and rights to feed their family, and want to live with dignity. I say that it begins to be a political movement" (NFB, 1994).

Collective Kitchens, however, have been criticized as an alternative to deal with the problem of food and poverty. Criticisms have come mainly from groups that perceive a need to focus on changes at the societal level. Diane Norman referred to some criticisms:

> "We had big opposition from radical groups who said: "You have to let the poor became really hungry, no food banks, no Collective Kitchens, no nothing, you know, or you will never get any change" " (NFB, 1994).

There seems to be a tendency within the documentary itself to focus away from systemic transformations and towards changes only at the individual level. For example, Marie Burlie's comments illustrate well that organizers of Collective Kitchens may still find it valid to focus on change understood mainly as personal transformation:

> "At times we forget that it is easy for us to say that: that you change your life, you change your life style. But, I think, that if you never happened to, that is, you have never been shown how is done...How do you change your life style?" (NFB, 1994).

Poverty, however, is complex. The promises of the "War on Poverty" showed the danger of failing to address how societal forces are involved in the creation and maintenance of structures that are oppressive and responsible for all sorts of social ills (Morgaine, 1992a). Efforts that focus on changing the individual are insufficient because efforts to change society are also needed. Personal development must be understood as the development of critical consciousness for larger, societal, change.

Although small changes may be beautiful, they may also be insignificant if not understood as a condition for societal change (Vio Grossi, 1992). The Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec incorporates the importance of societal change in their philosophy.

Collective Kitchens of Quebec

In Quebec, Collective Kitchens formed a Coalition. This collective has 270 group members, of the 300 to 350 existing Collective Kitchens of Quebec. The Coalition was formed after meetings in 1988 among the different Collective Kitchens of the Montreal region. The idea was to form a Coalition that would keep a central spirit of dignity at the root of the movement. In June, 1991, 21 participants called for a General Assembly and elected their first Administrative Council with the mandate of preparing a provincial meeting that would bring together all the Collective Kitchens of Quebec. The meeting took place on October 24, 1991 with an attendance of 200 representatives who met to share their knowledge and experience (Regroupement des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994).

By the Fall of 1992, the Coalition was able to finance its first location at the Rue de Champlain. It started with two staff members, and a third staff member was recruited later. In October 23, 1992 it held its first General Assembly. That year, the documentary entitled "Les Chaudrons qui Chantent" (The singing cauldrons) was made. The documentary became a valuable tool for training and implementation of Collective Kitchens which encouraged inter-aid (Regroupement des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994). The origins of Collective Kitchens are described as follows:

> "In 1986, two sisters, heads of their households, and their friends got together at Hochelaga-Maisonneuve to plan and cook their food for the week. They are an example of clarity and determination. Their initiative is an example to be followed by other women. The ideal of cooking collectively appears as a movement towards solidarity, towards taking charge and responsibility,

showing dignity" (Regroupement des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994, p.2).

The Coalition developed educational programs for coordinators and participants in Collective Kitchens intending to address both the technical, or cooking aspects of the program, and the human relationships, or collective aspects. Relationship issues have been a challenge for the group; and to avoid unnecessary conflicts, Coalition members suggested that personal information about participants be collected in order to form more compatible groups.

> "When they (participants) have their first meeting, the women talk about their dreams of society, their dreams of family, their dreams of a new way of living their lives and generally we try to find a common point between all of them. The common point becomes a kind of objective for this group, that is always behind the group. We try to create this "unnatural group" gradually into a "natural group." The important thing is not whether the dream (objective) is realizable but the values that people have inside" (Talbot, 1995).

According to Johanne Talbot (1995), the greatest challenge for coordinators is to realize the potential of the groups. However, discovering and making public the potential of Collective Kitchens is part of the mandate of the Coalition.

> "We had (during the general assembly) maybe 25 to 30 testimonials, all (participants) talking about how the Collective Kitchens had changed their lives. There have been articles in the press about this event...I think this event has been like a second wind for Collective Kitchens in Quebec because after this event we have had a lot of people calling..." (Talbot, 1995).

Communication among individual groups is maintained through mail and phone contacts as well as through the publication of a newsletter that the Coalition sends to all its members. The Coalition also has contacts with other Canadian organizations and with foreign organizations such as *Comedores Populares* of Peru. In 1994 the Coalition obtained its own charity number. The Coalition is financed by Centraide, Health and Welfare Canada, the Jean Coutu Foundation and by other smaller grants. The Coalition is part of an action research project about Collective Kitchens, in collaboration with the Universities of Laval and of Montreal (Regroupment des Cousines Collectives du Quebec, 1994).

The Coalition recognized the political aspects of Collective Kitchens and the connection between their existence and the growing structural inequality in Canada:

> "It is not a secret that Collective Kitchens are the result of political problems due to the unequal distribution of resources. Women must know that in acting they can transform their poverty and their living situation. Their discovery within the Collective Kitchens is not uniquely focused in managing poverty. The proceedings of people collectively in charge becomes a place to nourish reflection and to give a conscientization that encourages to act, within a mind frame of social transformation" (Regroupement des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994, p. 21).

The Coalition also pursues formal recognition for Collective Kitchens' coordinators. Talbot (1995) believes that funding should be provided for coordinators because Collective Kitchens' coordinators perform social work. However, current reductions in social assistance and the continual threat of further reductions have made the environment very unstable for Collective Kitchen groups, particularly those including low income participants. Collective Kitchens are varied; this study focuses on Collective Kitchens at Casa Celeste.

Collective Kitchens at Casa Celeste

A brief history of Casa Celeste, its mission, belief statement and other aspects of its philosophy are discussed in this section. This study describes one particular subset of Collective Kitchens integrated by Latin American women that were implemented at Casa Celeste, in a large Western Canadian city.

Casa Celeste is an organization that operates in a low income area of the mentioned city. The residential area includes more than a thousand low income multifamily units; a large proportion of the residents live in single parent households headed by women who are social assistance recipients or belong to the growing group of people often labeled as "working poor". According to the (1991) Federal Census, 75-80% of the families in the area live below the poverty line. This community exhibits many of the challenges found within inner city neighbourhoods: isolation,

family violence, a transient population, and other issues associated with poverty are often concerns (Casa Celeste, 1994a).

Casa Celeste emerged in 1988 from a joint venture between a city community college and a social service agency. Staff from both organizations committed part of their time to the project from 1987 to 1991. The project started as a women's project; meetings were then held once a week at a community building. These initial steps are described by one of the promoters of the project as follows:

> "It was a huge new language and way of working for me. The Consumer Education Project hired (name) and she and I began to look at working in a different way -a participatory approach to education. We did a needs assessment and chose the area. She (name) met with social workers and I talked with (name) who suggested that we look at the (name of areas) and she was then instrumental in linking us with the (name of centre) tenant's centre run by members of the (name) church" (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 6).

The purpose of the initial project was to apply in the area a community development model that subscribed to a participatory education approach in order to encourage resident women to identify the issues of the area. From the beginning, the need for stable, long term funding for the project was identified and pursued. The idea of employing people from the community to perform the community work needed in the area was favoured. The project directors believed that a ripple effect would occur if residents themselves engaged in community work as the following quote documents.

> "We both felt strongly that we wanted to pay as many people as possible -to get the money into the hands of the people in the community. Paying the people in the community and having the community be their own best community worker rather than an expert parachuting in and fooling ourselves that there is a quick fix to the social problems of crime, violence, poverty, unemployment, underemployment, lack of education, poor health, vandalism" (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p.8).

The original idea was to form a cooperative, but Casa Celeste became incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1989. Funding from the provincial and municipal governments, mainly for an employment preparation program, was

obtained. Ten positions were made available to people from the community who showed commitment while interviewed to remaining in the community. The people, selected in this manner, was expected to become community leaders.

Casa Celeste operates based on the assumption that experts are the people who live the issues. For example, the following beliefs are mentioned in their publication as their guiding principles: learning should occur in an egalitarian environment where everybody teaches and learns; individuals need to be honoured in their knowledge and encouraged to see themselves as both capable and responsible for their own learning; the group is encouraged to work together to find solutions to issues identified in the community; blaming individuals should be avoided (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 37).

Activities such as bead work, sewing, crochet and cooking have been encouraged because participants at Casa Celeste appear to relax and be more open or sharing while working in those activities. As well, some of the programs that are offered include native crafts, sewing groups, language learning for newcomers, employment preparation, community kitchens, Collective Kitchens, and community gardens. A previous coordinator of the organization discusses the effect of quilting as follows:

> "So, somebody can make a quilt and they couldn't before. Well, of course it helps. It's all part of a bigger whole, where we feel more like we live together in a community where we need to support each other, and to me that' s really wonderful. It is not changing the political powers but I think that having political people come out to Casa Celeste and saying that it is important that you vote, people slowly start to feel a sense of 'yeah-if you vote you can make a difference. If I speak up it will make a difference." The uniqueness of Casa Celeste is that you always find out that collectively you are much stronger that you are individually. If Casa Celeste decides to support somebody or a cause, you know you can speak as a group and you are stronger " (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 39).

In order to identify the programs needed in the community an initial survey was conducted. The survey showed that the needs of residents were numerous. From

some of the identified needs, programs evolved. Long term concerns, however, could not be addressed if most immediate needs were not attended to. For example, it was difficult for women to become involved in activities if child care was not provided so the organization provided child care. The impact of Casa Celeste on the community is discussed as follows:

> "What is clear for the participants of Casa Celeste is that there is change, in people's lives and in the community. Part of that change comes from gaining a better feeling about oneself, and learning how to work with other people" (Casa Celeste, 1994b. p. 26).

A cooking group of Latin American women existed prior to the beginning of Collective Kitchens. Maria, a collaborator and the coordinator of the group, became aware of the difficulties many Latin American women had in learning about and using the foodstuffs available in Canada. She believed that it would benefit Latin American women to cook together; they could overcome the challenge that unfamiliar foodstuffs presented.

Maria found, however, strong resistance when encouraging women to change eating habits. When a nurse from Quebec came to Casa Celeste with the idea of Collective Kitchens, Maria became enthusiastic because she saw possibilities in the program for promoting greater variability in the eating habits of Latin Americans. Collective Kitchens exclusively integrated by Latin American women started at Casa Celeste coordinated by Maria.

In summary, *Comedores Populares* of Peru are often recognized as the model that inspired Collective Kitchens in Canada. Collective Kitchens in Canada started from a project developed by Diana Norman, although the Coalition of Collective Kitchens traces their beginnings to the initiative of a group of women from Quebec. Collective Kitchens are complex in part because there is recognized variation within and between the groups, but also because they seem to fulfill a variety of needs and expectations. Collective Kitchens are perceived as community

development initiatives that provide a more dignified alternative, than other initiatives such as food banks or vouchers, to people facing food insecurity. It is because they are considered a form of community development that a review of community development literature follows.

Community development

The Collective Kitchens in which the collaborators participated existed within an organization that emerged as a community development project in 1985 (Casa Celeste, 1994b). Thus to provide a link to community development the literature related to community development was reviewed.

The next section is an historical review of community development. It is followed by information about community development in Canada. The section ends with a discussion of perspectives and issues regarding community development.

Historical review

The field of community development has had a long history. Some of the principles of community development were set forth by the British colonial office during the 1930's and involved mass education for *political democracy*. The first documents were published to be used by field officers in their work with local African and Asian populations to help them achieve self-determination. In Canada, the first serious attempt of community development was undertaken to organize fishermen in the Maritime Region, and cooperative and community education principles were combined. After World War II, however, community development came into prominence on a world-wide basis with support from the United Nations and other international organizations (Campfens, 1982).

Different models emerged to take into account differences in social, political, cultural and economic conditions. In India, for instance, Community development was viewed primarily as a *political movement*, devised by the national government

in mobilizing people to raise standards of living. In other countries, more concerned with food production, community development was under the jurisdiction of Ministries of Agriculture and it followed U.S. models to encourage farmers to adopt modern technology. In many countries in South America, community development was assigned to Ministries of Education with the purpose of attacking illiteracy and training the local population for the work force. From 1965 on, community development efforts grew and extended into both First and Third world countries (Campfens, 1982).

The concerns addressed by community development efforts included: broad citizen participation in development plans; local initiative and self-help, with promotion and support of government funding and expertise; development of local leadership and human resources indigenous to the community; and integration and coordination of governments and voluntary agencies in service delivery at community level. These concerns are still related to the field (Campfens, 1982).

Community development in Canada

Canadian practice and experience in both public and private sectors has highlighted, as Bregha noted already in 1971, the dual concern of community development with *increases in productivity, resources, or human capacities* for personal problem solving or with *reallocation of power and resources* within society. The former concern was expressed most commonly in programmatic initiatives undertaken in Third World countries during the "development decades". The latter concern was more prominent in North American community development practice, particularly within urban centers during the activist period and with the government supported "War on Poverty" programs (Campfens, 1982; Morgaine, 1992a).

During the "War on Poverty", community development played a significant role in promoting alternative programs while addressing the mounting dissatisfaction with the dehumanization in industrialized society and the inequities experienced by

poor people living in the midst of affluence. Poverty was often considered a local and private matter that could be treated without bringing about any changes in institutional arrangements and public policy. The issue had yet to be restated as one of *inequitable distribution of power and resources* in which the poor shared little (Campfens, 1982; Cary, 1979; Morgaine, 1992a). Community development's focus on reallocation of power and resources, or the achievement of social justice, became in this light essentially political.

However, to achieve an equitable social order there are inevitable conflicts and confrontations. As Saul Alinsky observed, "the haves rarely give up that which they have willingly, without a struggle." Thus, those threatened by purposive community development put pressure on government to discontinue funding of programs pursuing these objectives. The world recession that continues throughout the 1980's, as well as changes in the societal context have been responsible for communities and community groups falling back in their own resources. The recession also increased concerns, within North America, with a view of community *development as increase*, the norm in Third World countries, rather than *as reallocation of power and resources* (Chekki, 1979; Campfens, 1994).

Community development: Typologies

Community development can be understood as a method, as a program, as a movement, or as a process (Campfens et al., 1992; Chekki, 1979). As a method, it is vulnerable to manipulation and mystification, forcing specific goals on the community and leading to a form of social control detrimental to people. This tendency has been identified by Labonte (1990) as "community-based programming," or taking the agenda of government to local community groups. As a program, community development requires the specification of a set of activities which require quantification, analysis and risks becoming task oriented.

As a movement, community development is perceived as an ideology which celebrates the principle of progress; but, which can encourage the emergence of grassroots movements that have community control, emancipation and empowerment as their principal ideological goal (Campfens et al., 1992). While, as a process, community development assumes an idealist ontology where change in people's ideas and values is a prerequisite to any substantial change in the social structure (Chekki, 1979).

Understood as a process, community development is a systematic approach to change that emphasizes the notion of change in a series of stages aimed mainly at community self-determination and cherishing community autonomy as the ultimate goal. Members of the community, themselves, define their common needs, elucidate and implement a plan to satisfy those needs. Education, however, is the most important feature of community development as process; *education for action* is what community development as a process is about (Campfens, 1994; Chekki, 1979).

Because of community development's idealist ontology, frequently, the focus of evaluation has been on changes in attitudes or behaviours of people, rather than on the impact of community development on the social structure. Often community development projects result in minor modifications, rather than institutional changes or power transfers (Cary, 1979). Vio Grossi (1992) discussed the complexity of change as follows:

> "It is not a question of passing from one unilateral position to another, because, while change in "the small" can be beautiful, as professed by Schumacher, it can become ineffective if not understood as a condition that prepares and facilitates change in the larger society" (Vio Grossi, 1992, p. 31).

Community development: Issues

In relation to community development two issues are discussed that were addressed by the community development literature and are connected to

emergent issues discussed in this study. They are: the definition of community and the growing importance of macro level events and/or policies in the lives of people and communities.

Defining community

There is a classical conception of community as *gemeinschaft,* enunciated by Toennies, that exalts the simplicity and purity of communal societies anterior to modern mass society (Chekki, 1979). Our ideas about community are, however, a historical construction originated from idealizations developed by philosophers and sociologists in the 19th Century. These ideas began as a critique of the social relations of capitalism and provided an alternative to them. Characteristics of precapitalist societies became, however, reified. Standards for social relations that are probably incompatible with the constantly changing needs of today's capitalist society became the goal (Bullock, 1990).

Community can be defined as the geographical community, or a territorial delineation that disregards common interest (Chekki, 1979). Despite the limitations of using the geographical community, because of probable conflicting interests among residents, there is potential in using this view of community for developing solidarity among friends and neighbours. For example, a particular neighbourhood may unite against a particular policy. The community of interest, has also been an option when defining community. Although it suffers from clarity, it also has potential for providing a sense of identity, belonging and purpose for people whose lives may be characterized by isolation or alienation (Muller, Walker & Ng, 1990).

In general, two approaches can be distinguished in managing the issue of community. The first is the *standard approach* which defines and redefines community. For instance, community may be defined as the geographical area, encapsulating the common needs of those who live or work there or it may be based on issues or needs that unite people beyond geographical boundaries. The

second is the *descriptive approach* which uses the term community descriptively, while trying to understand the social relations involved in creating a caring community; that is, the social production and reproduction of community. Those who use the second approach are often concerned with the transformation of the State and Civil Society and as a result make the concept "community" problematic (Muller, Walker & Ng, 1990).

The importance of macro level events

Community development has often been adopted as a "panacea" to improve socioeconomic conditions in Third World countries and to wage the "War on Poverty" in First World ones. Community development cannot be, however, a solution to all problems. There are limitations implicit in dealing with poverty at the local level and in a profit oriented society; often wider societal changes are required and community development may need to be rethought in terms of empowerment as Campfens (1992) argues:

> "As a form of social development, community development needs to be rethought in terms of empowerment of those who are without power and necessary resources; and, in terms of building social supports for those that are without community"(Campfens, 1992, p. 8).

As pointed almost two decades ago by Cary (1979), at the same time that community development is being promoted as desirable for a democratic society, other macro level events removed power from the communities creating serious contradictions for community development and increased the challenges to be faced.

Macroeconomic policies, such as privatization, trade liberalization and decreases in government spending point to the challenges at global and domestic levels. For example, at the global level, structural adjustments ratified by 12 of the 15 indebted Third World countries ensured a net transfer of resources from South to North that affected the prospects for community development in the South. At the

domestic level, structural adjustments that involve an economic assault on the living standards of the poor, and a political assault on the organized bases of popular resistance to these measures, favoured a growing inequality among citizens (Gershman, 1994).

> "What is most disturbing is that the rich in the world are getting richer and the poor become poorer with all the accompanying problems. This is true between nations of the Third World and the developed North, as it is at the domestic level of nations" (Campfens, 1992, p. 4).

During the 1970s, the dominant focus in Latin America has been massive popular mobilizations. The emergence of both popular education, originated by Paulo Freire, and of liberation theology, introduced by the Christian based communities, put the focus on methods of achieving critical consciousness. Increased awareness among the poor about the functioning of power at personal, family and local level as well as of the structures and exercises of power at societal and macro level were encouraged. People's general demand was for social and political democracy, in addition to a fairer society (Campfens, 1988a; 1992).

Democratization became an option and the best hope for democratization was to be found among the popular sector struggle for a more egalitarian society. Today, globalization encourages neoliberal economics that threaten democratization. Economic liberalism is applied aggressively in most Latin American countries but this model has been disproved by history as one that will never secure social justice (Ballon, 1992).

Historically, modernization in Latin America and the Third World, was pursued by the state under pressure by business and was then unconcerned with issues of social justice. Modernization has been experienced by the population generally as a failure. Economic liberalism is a new version of the same and it is experienced by people as oppressive (Avery, 1994; McAf[illegible]e, 1994; Ndiaye, 1994). Concerns with the

well being of people should be a priority and can be ensured only with people's involvement.

> "Judging from our recent history, the resolution of this divergence - modernization/democratization- finds its best hope in the popular sector of civic society, because of its proven management capacity and because of its option for a better society" (Ballon, 1992, p. 18).

Today, for average Canadians, issues of survival in a more difficult economic and social environment are also important. There are concerns about those who are permanently and structurally unemployed, or who are the victims of a changing economic structure that renders them dispensable. There are also concerns about members of visible minorities faced with racism and institutional forms of discrimination. As well, there are concerns about the seniors, the physically challenged, the deinstitutionalized, beleaguered families, lonely individuals and the poor (Czerny & Swift, 1984; Kieren, 1994; Riches, 1987). Issues of income redistribution and social justice are becoming more important for Canadians.

> "As for the have countries, it seems that in spite of all that money moving northward, little is distributed to benefit the lower income people of the developed countries" (Campfens, 1992, p.5).

The dominant discourse in First World countries has shifted from social concerns to deficit control and resource scarcity, concerns with big government and with the cost of a welfare state (Campfens, 1982). This discourse justifies the need, within First World countries, to slim down, cutting the cost of labour and social and economic programs. The marketplace has become the guiding principle of society and market concerns have become the new rational justification for hierarchy and inequality (Laxer, 1993).

Among international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Third World countries, there was an observable progress from goals of relief, to development and to liberation. The current environment, however, favours a new policy thrust by which Northern NGOs become less concerned with liberation or

development and more concerned with charity and with ensuring funding (Campfens, 1994).

Research carried out with NGOs, which promote development in Third World countries, may apply to Canadian non-profit organizations. Findings showed that although most Canadian NGOs defined their approach of community development as process oriented, in planning and selecting their projects they ranked a task oriented factor highest. Despite the value of advocacy work they did not see themselves as critics of government policies. NGOs that worked predominantly with women appeared little concerned with gender issues. Overall, NGOs were vulnerable to being co-opted by government and funding agencies in their selection of programs and focus (Campfens et al., 1992).

Most importantly: the organizations' focus on achieving self-reliant communities had been dominated by a *micro level perspective* that is self-defeating because it favours micro level answers to macro level problems. This approach fits with a neoconservative agenda that promotes communities as self-reliant in the midst of strong and disruptive macro level forces and contributes to blaming low resource communities since unequal distribution of resources and power goes generally unchallenged (Campfens et al., 1992). A micro level focus damages people. In social work Labonte (1990) questioned a micro level focus and labeled it the *privatization of social and economic underpinnings of poverty*.

In summary, the history of community development shows that it started from concerns with mass education for political democracy. Its common themes include needs for broad participation, local initiative, self help, development of local leadership as well as integration and cooperation among service providers. community development can be perceived as a process for change centered on education for action where individuals are encouraged to gain awareness about their situation and act to transform it (Campfens, 1982, 1994).

However, changes at the individual level have often dominated community development, while changes at the societal level have been neglected. A general neglect of socioeconomic aspects has frequently encouraged the support of an agenda towards change that work against the empowerment of individuals and communities. Societal or structural forces, as problematic or as involved in the creation and maintenance of social ills, have generally not been addressed (Campfens, 1982; Kieren, 1994; Morgaine, 1992a).

There are limits in dealing with issues such as poverty, at a local level, in a profit oriented society and when macro level events become crucial (Campfens, 1992, 1994). Increased understanding about the connections between personal and structural aspects of poverty is needed; Gutierrez discussed this as follows:

> "As long as we talked simply of poverty, which have become so massive (in the Third World) that one had to be blind not to notice, there would be no arguments. But as soon as we began to lecture on the structural causes of poverty we ran into difficulty with the privileged classes of our countries." (Gutierrez, 1992, p.21).

In general, community development has been an attempt to get out from under the "oppressor's thumb," or to set forth a fresh dynamic in communities. Capitalism at home has created the ghettos and underdeveloped communities; international monopoly capitalism has underdeveloped the Third World. Community development on the material level is necessary to overcome underdevelopment but it is insufficient; it needs the development of human consciousness (King & George, 1987).

Community development's appeal to disparate groups, and its promotion by groups of contrasting ideologies, highlights the importance of critical reflection whenever community development, as a model for social change, is implemented. Latin American experience favours a focus on social transformation through community based approaches where the poor create their own vehicles in learning

to survive, protect their interests and organize for social change. One of these approaches to community development is participatory education (Campfens, 1988a, 1992 ; Checkoway, 1995).

Participatory or Popular Education

Popular education aims fundamentally at the formation of subjects for change, departing from experienced reality. Participatory education requires the full involvement of people in decision making related to the planning of their economies and societies. Consciousness raising strategies, perceived here as acceptable, aim at raising general awareness about social forces that mitigate against people's socioeconomic advancement, as well as of those that aid in the rediscovery of their worth and potential to change undesirable conditions (Ankrah, 1992).

Vio Grossi (1992) defined at least four characteristics of popular education. First, popular education is a type of education for collective work that tends to take on the tasks of practice in an organized form. Second, it teaches to respect and to appreciate the differences and diverse contributions of each within the group being educated, as well as between the group and others. Third, those being educated do not learn a specific content but "learn to learn." They do not consume results but deal with methodologies so that they may "discover", even if what they discover has already been discovered. Finally, popular education is a type of education that departs from practice, action, and reality as personally experienced.

The objective of participatory education is to incorporate the fundamentals of learning, or an integral part of people's experience in their struggle to fulfill their basic needs, to arrive at a more dignified life. In Latin America, where popular education emerged from the theories of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, this approach to community development is quite popular. Freire advocated that scholars engage in the adventure of allowing the poor to ask questions. Scholars, in

turn, assume risks that may result from actions taken in solidarity with the poor (Ankrah, 1992).

In First World countries, participatory education has been influential in education and within the field of social work where some social workers identify with Freire's views. In Latin America, parallel to popular education, a movement from Christian base communities emerged supported, at the level of theory, by liberation theology. There are principles shared by liberation theology and popular education. For example, both favour solidarity with the poor and encourage a view of people affected by poverty as subjects of action and transformation towards a more just society (Campfens, 1988a).

In Canada, for example, the Catholic bishops of Quebec and Canada took on a new position regarding poverty that parallels changes in Latin America. For example the United Church of Canada adopted positions and policies induced by liberation theology. Views of the poor rooted in idealist theology, originated in the charity drives coordinated by Charity Organization Societies and set up in England at the end of the 19th century, may still influence today's work and view of the poor even among social workers. Jacob (1992), explicitly discussed and questioned some of the original creeds of social work. The following quote illustrates that.

> "Charity must be given with discernment...; the poor are frauds and responsible for their situation...; the government should not intervene to find solutions..." (Jacob, 1992, p. 26).

Increased familiarity with the Latin American experience and with popular education and liberation theology, as they evolved in Latin America, can contribute to promote more egalitarian modes of relating with the poor and better understanding of the transformations required in constructing a more just society. Latin American experiences show the existence of growing networks of solidarity and cooperation among the poor while there is potential, and need, for developing

global networks for social change. More egalitarian relations between NGOs, Northern and Southern, working in the area of Third World development could encourage valuable exchanges (Campfens, 1994). A move in that direction is suggested by Chodos (1993) as the following quote illustrates.

> "If globalization is limited to multinational corporations, it presents the prospect of power being concentrated in a collection of worldwide feudal baronies...Proposals to broaden globalization...must come from other sectors of society (such as non-governmental organizations of various kinds) (Chodos, Murphy & Hamovitch, 1993, p. 178).

In summary, participatory education has these aims: the formation of subjects who, departing from their experienced reality, would concern themselves with change at both personal and societal levels. In Latin America the main interest of participatory education has been to incorporate the fundamentals of learning to people's struggle for a more dignified life.

In general, non-profit organizations can benefit from exchanges with similar organizations from Third World countries. For example, Campfens (1994) suggested that more egalitarian relations between Northern and Southern NGOs would benefit both. Collective Kitchens, inspired by *Comedores Populares*, maintain regular contact with Third World organizations sponsoring *Comedores* through the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec.

Knowledge from the field of education can help to develop the potential of Collective Kitchens by encouraging awareness about forms of knowledge, or forms of knowing, and by facilitating the integration of three learning related paradigms.

Forms of Knowing

Aoki (1987) traced back to Jurgen Habermas, a German scholar affiliated with the Frankfurt School, three different paradigms of knowing as valuable in education research and practice. These paradigms are known as Technical/Instrumental, Situational/Interpretive and Critical/Emancipatory.

Technical/Instrumental, also called Means-ends, is pragmatically oriented; that is, it focuses on empirical ways of knowing, or learning through practice. In education, and in family life education, followers of this paradigm generally assume that there is a single reality of life, independent of human uniqueness. Their expectation is that once people acquire technical knowledge and skills life change will generally follow (Morgaine, 1992b).

The Situational/Interpretive paradigm is more concerned with the interpretation of meaning and, therefore, with reality as intersubjectively constructed. In a social situation people and events are given meaning by those who are living in the situation (Aoki, 1979, 1987). Situational/Interpretive knowing is based on the human need to understand self and others. It is concerned with striking a "resonant chord" among people by focusing on common meanings and it assumes that there is no single reality of life. Knowledge is created by individuals living in their time and that gaining understanding or reflecting on meaning act as catalyst for change and action (Morgaine, 1992b).

Critical/Emancipatory knowing can be distinguished from other forms of knowing by an interest in bringing into full view underlying perspectives that are typically taken for granted and therefore hidden from view (Aoki, 1979, 1987; Fay, 1977). Critical/Emancipatory knowing is in many senses similar to Interpretive knowing but this form of knowing includes assumptions about the capability of people to acquire critical insight into the aspects of life that hinder optimal development of self and interpersonal relationships. Enlightenment, that is self understanding, not only helps personal development but in itself is the beginning of societal transformation. Its focus is in the increased understanding of hidden assumptions, perspectives, motives, rationalizations, and ideologies as crucial to bring into fuller view underlying aspects that have not been perceived (Morgaine, 1992b; Fay, 1977).

Forms of knowing have been applied to curriculum development and evaluation and to other forms of educational activity such as family life education. Awareness about forms of knowing is particularly important in the educational situation because of the primary concern of education with learning and transformation, at both personal and societal levels. Collective Kitchens can be understood as educational situations because learning is a concern within Collective Kitchens. The need for multiple perspectives, or multiple paradigms, in educational situations has been noted (Aoki, 1979, 1987; Morgaine, 1992b).

Technical/Instrumental knowledge is concerned with work and control. Within Collective Kitchens this form of knowing could relate primarily to learning skills in a practical manner, or learn by doing. For example, skills considered valuable within Collective Kitchens are those related to food preparation, or skills that would enable participants to prepare food that is non-expensive. These skills appear helpful to participants in Collective Kitchens because participants are generally low income mothers concerned with nutrition, taste and food costs. Collective Kitchens could also be interpreted as a means-towards-the-end of low cost food provision for low income people. The end would be low cost food production and the means: Collective Kitchens.

Situational/Interpretive knowledge is concerned with communication and with reaching intersubjective understandings within groups or with the importance of meanings. Within Collective Kitchens the activity of concern from a Situation/Interpretive perspective could be the quality of communication and relationships among participants. Situational/Interpretive knowledge is congruent with concerns about the development of intersubjective understandings along with the value and need of departing from reality as experienced by individual group members. The focus could be the process of developing meaningful connections among group members.

Critical/Emancipatory knowledge is concerned with critical reflection about how personal development is affected by systemic structures. Improvement of human conditions is the interest, achieved through rendering visible what is tacit, implicit or invisible. It focuses on questioning the "taken for granted," making problematic what seems non-problematic. Educative models, as described by Fay (1977), are congruent with Critical/Emancipatory knowledge. They incorporate group processes designed to equalize power relationships among participants and facilitator as well as dialogue based on life experiences and on reflection about discrepancies between ideals and realities of everyday life.

Within Collective Kitchens this form of knowing is congruent with a focus on questioning that departs from personal experience and encourages both personal and societal transformations. This approach could be perceived as political, because it challenges ideological understandings. It is also concerned with process because it could validate and facilitate the formation of grassroots movements and coalitions that pursue social transformation.

In summary, forms of knowledge are paradigms strongly connected to education and learning. Technical knowing is often favoured while the other two paradigms are neglected. Education literature, however, encourages educators to integrate the three paradigms to ensure a more meaningful educational experience.

Generally, the literature pertinent to Collective Kitchens, or their connection to *Comedores Populares* and their development in Canada, the fields of community development and of participatory education and forms of knowledge have been reviewed. The reviewed literature provides contextual knowledge to the study. The methodology selected, the resulting findings and the discussion are addressed in the following chapters.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Within this section, the interpretive approach or general methodology of the study and the ecological framework utilized for data collection and analysis are discussed. The profile of the collaborators, specific methods of data collection and analysis, ethical issues and issues related to reliability and validity are also presented.

The purpose of the study was to document how participants experienced Collective Kitchens by collaborating with them. Latin American women were selected as the convenient and purposive sample for the study. Conveniently, there was a group of Latin American women who had participated in Collective Kitchens. The researcher was also interested in studying women from a linguistically and ethnically similar background to her own because she considered this as crucial in obtaining meaningful data. Furthermore, there has been lack of research published about the experiences of Latin American women in the literature. Therefore, Latin American women were invited to participate in the study.

The method selected for the study was interpretive. It is concerned with a form of knowing that is situational and with a focus on describing and bringing into awareness collaborators' experiences. The interpretive method is congruent with a feminist philosophical orientation that assumes that gender is an important variable in the research. Therefore, this research provided the opportunity for the voices of women to be heard. Finally, an ecological framework was selected to guide the data collection and analysis in this study. The specific ecological framework described within the study emerged from this particular research situation.

Interpretive Method

Primarily, a researcher using the interpretive method is concerned with gaining insight into human experiences. The form of knowing is situational knowing; people give particular meanings to each situation experienced, and people

interpret the same event in different ways. The focus is in describing, clarifying, authenticating and bringing into full awareness the experiences of participants (Aoki, 1987).

Gadamer's discussion of social theory, as Hekman (1984) noted, states that interpretation is always from a certain perspective. Understanding is neither an appropriation of the actor's concepts nor an imposition of the interpreter's categories but a coming together of the two into a new entity; that is, the interpretation. Interpretation varies with the interpreter; meaning emerges from the dialectic interplay between author and reader, or in this case transcribed text and researcher. Interpretation is in this sense a "possibility" which is no more or less valid than other possibilities. Since each view is prejudiced, because pre-understandings are a condition for understanding and any understanding is from a position, exploring possibilities enriches understanding.

Hekman (1984) also noted that Gadamer denied the "epistemological primacy" of the text' s author; that is, interpretation is the emergence of something new involving both interpreter and interpreted. Positivists failed, in Gadamer's view, by denying the role of the actor or interpreted; while, interpretivists failed to sufficiently justify the value of the role of the interpreter. Construction of meaning beyond that of the author, actor or interpreted can occur without being suspect because any resultant interpretation is just that, an interpretation (Hekman, 1984). In this study, first and second level analysis of the data encouraged awareness about both aspects. While first level analysis focuses on collaborators' understandings second level analysis integrates the data and includes the researcher's interpretation.

The importance of language in the interpretive process of this study is obvious and from here the relevance of the researcher's familiarity with both participants' language and culture. Latin American immigrant women may be particularly

vulnerable to language issues because of their recent migration (Allmen, 1988; Boyd, 1992; Disman, 1988; Herberg, 1988). Experiences of people struggling to communicate meaningfully in a second language often lead to child-like feelings, such as shame, inferiority, and even withdrawal. For those who manage to achieve relative mastering of both languages, plus incorporation to the host society, there is experience of gains rather than losses; for others, however, it is challenging as illustrated by De Fantino (1982) in the following quote:

> "It was a hard time for me. I had never before experienced this feeling of helplessness. I became aware of how much of ourselves we put in words. It was like being on stage in a pantomime, feeling dumb and odd...(De Fantino, 1982, p. 38).

Furthermore, previous research findings argue in favor of building rapport and trust when doing research with Latin Americans; while the literature also favours female researchers who are fluent in Spanish with Latin American participants of both sexes (Marin & Marin, 1991). Therefore, conducting the study in Spanish addressed previous research concerns.

As mentioned, this study is congruent with feminism because of its focus on women's experiences, understandings and issues as well as because of its collaborative methodology. Views of women's lives and assumptions about their subjectivity, once seen by researchers as universally homogeneous, have become sharpened and differentiated. This has led to a reflexive stance among researchers about several components that include: conduct of the research, the feminist's place in it, the researcher's relationship to participants, the philosophical location and nature of knowledge, the handling of the report and the impact of feminist research on the researcher's discipline (Olesen, 1994).

Although there are many different feminist voices these voices share a common outlook. For example, it is important to center and make problematic women's diverse situations as well as to the institutions that influence those situations.

It is fundamental for feminists to examine what is problematic, within the theoretical, policy or action framework, in the interest of realizing social justice for women. Therefore, despite the variety of qualitative styles that are used by feminist qualitative researchers, they mostly share an assumption also shared by interpretive researchers: interpretive human actions can be the focus of research (Olesen, 1994).

Because the interpretive approach recognizes potentially different experiences and knowledge between researcher and collaborators, a collaborative relationship is encouraged. Collaborative research encourages the development of trust and the emergence of meaningful understandings. When learning is understood as collaboration, important gains are foreseen in research for both researcher and participants (Pugh & Donleavy, 1988). For example, participants indicated that they shared with greater comfort and ease. In this research, participants will be generally referred to as collaborators.

To draw from interpretations that were holistic, to avoid atomistic and favour holistic and contextual analysis, departing from women's experiences, an ecological framework, discussed in the following section, was integrated.

Ecological Framework

Human ecology is unique in its focus on humans as both biological organisms and social beings in interaction with their environment. An ecological perspective has re-emerged in the 1960s with the increased awareness of interdependence of human actions and environmental quality along with interest in viewing phenomena from a holistic perspective (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Boff (1995), who has a similar view of human ecology, described his vision in the following manner:

> "Ecology is not an expensive whim of the rich, something trendy restricted to ecological groups...The ecological question has to do with reaching a new level of globalization, of world awareness and conscience, where there is a universal understanding of the importance of the earth as a whole, the welfare of nature and of humankind, the interdependence of all..."(Boff, 1995, p.8).

Ecology tries to situate everything in relation with the past, or to see things in the context of their origin or genealogy, for they have a history. Ecology seeks a vision of the whole, a holistic view, which does not derive from the sum of the parts but from interdependence. Everything is interrelated to everything in some way. Individuals are embedded in communities and they are interdependent subjects. Persons see themselves as part of a whole or a blending of past, present and future and both in process and in reciprocal relation (Boff, 1995; Vaines, 1988). Individuals are affected by macro level systems such as socioeconomic conditions, ideological trends and cultural transformations.

Underlying assumptions of the human ecological perspective are consistent with assumptions of interpretive and feminist perspectives that assert that hermeneutic and critical science views are necessary to gain valid knowledge and bring about change. Many perspectives acknowledge the importance of the sociohistorical and cultural context as well as of the environment, however defined, in the life and issues of individuals and their families (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993).

Furthermore, an ecological perspective is consistent with the viewpoint of critical science which argues that the aim of knowledge is to enlighten, educate and emancipate (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Critical science requires both rational discourse based on interpretation of empirically based knowledge and analysis of ecological conditions and their consequences. The ecological framework, because of its focus on the interdependence of systems, is particularly valuable for the type of analysis pursued in this study (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993).

An ecological framework was appropriately selected to guide data collection and analysis in this study. Data collection included interactive interviews with five collaborators who participated in Collective Kitchens at Casa Celeste. Data collection included document analysis about Casa Celeste's philosophy, beliefs and mission statements, as documented by the organization itself. It also included

information, and reflection upon the information, from the documentary entitled "Stir it Up" (NFB, 1994), and the booklet "Collective Kitchens Handbook" (EBH, 1992).

Data analysis was guided by the ecological framework as described by Figure 3.1. Thematic areas were identified from the data as the five main components of the framework. There were advantages in using the ecological framework because it encouraged a focus on both micro and macro level events while facilitating inclusiveness. For example, commonalties in the situations and concerns discussed by the collaborators could be identified at the macro level components of the framework, such as cultural preferences of food, that would influence the functioning of Collective Kitchens. Furthermore, salient issues for Collective Kitchens emerged from the thematic areas. The framework, because of the greater attention paid to thematic areas in context, encouraged the development of the researcher's awareness about connections and formats that emerged from the data analyzed.

Figure 3.1: Ecological Framework.

The model in Figure 3.1 was developed from the ecological framework proposed by researchers at Cornell University. The current model emerged, however, from the specific research situation of this study. Each sphere was identified with thematic areas that the collaborators discussed. The researcher was able, however, to initially follow Cornell's ecological framework. The emergent and more specific framework developed, however, from the data collected. It unfolded from thematic area one, the inner circle, to thematic area five, the outer circle, or from a micro level focus to a macro level focus. Using the ecological framework as a guide encouraged broad data collection and increased the breadth of reflection during data analysis. Findings from this study are reported in Chapter Four, Findings, following the ecological framework here discussed. A description of the process by which awareness of formats of Collective Kitchens, a discussion of the formats as well as the salient issues that emerged from the ecological framework are included in Chapter Five, Discussion.

Profile of the Collaborators

Interpretivist research relies on non probabilistic sampling methods. Use of these methods are based on the assumption that not only does an uneven distribution of knowledge exist within individuals experiencing a phenomenon; but, that individuals also vary in terms of their capabilities and willingness to disclose information. Generally, the sampling methods followed depend on the research question and purpose of the study (Field & Morse, 1985).

To address the purpose of this study or to gain increased understanding about Collective Kitchens, the investigation was limited to those immigrant women from Latin America who had participated in Collective Kitchens at Casa Celeste. Therefore, the selection of collaborators was purposive and convenient. The names and phone numbers of the collaborators were provided to the researcher by a key

informant. Of the six potential collaborators contacted for this study, five agreed to participate. One did not because of time constraints.

Truly this study counted with seven collaborators. The five women whose knowledge as participants within Collective Kitchens provided much of the data for this study and the two collaborators, also referred as key informants, who provided rich information because of their experiences working with Collective Kitchens. The relationship between all the study participants and the researcher was a collaborative relationship. Nevertheless, Maria and Johanne are at times described as key informants because the process of data collection was in their case different from the one followed with the other five collaborators. For example, while all the other collaborators were interviewed for a second time, Johanne and Maria were interviewed only once.

Furthermore, personal information was not collected from Johanne or Maria, because it was not perceived as relevant for the study. Personal information was, however, collected from other collaborators and it is reported in this section. Protection of collaborators privacy is encouraged by not making the association between collaborators' fictitious names and their profiles. The profiles of Adelaida, Dalila, Magenta, Marina and Marita are here described and only personal information that is perceived as relevant to the study is reported within the following paragraphs.

According to country of origin the collaborators were from, in alphabetical order, the following countries: Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua and El Salvador. In relation to age, marital status and number of children the following information was collected. One collaborator was in her seventies, two were in their early thirties and two in their early forties. Two collaborators were married, one was widowed and two were divorced or separated. One collaborator was retired. Two collaborators had small children. One of the collaborators with all her children attending

elementary school. The other collaborator had only one child attending elementary school, her second child was below school age. One collaborator had an adult daughter, not residing with her. Two collaborators had teenager and/or young adult children.

In relation to language, all collaborators mentioned that communication in English was generally challenging. However, this was particularly challenging for two collaborators who, due mainly to lack of training, either recognized or showed that they had some important communication difficulties. Most collaborators reported to have low incomes, below poverty line. At the time the collaborators participated in Collective Kitchens, none of them were working or studying.

Collaborators' experiences and/or extent of participation within Collective Kitchens were varied. Three of the collaborators participated almost exclusively in Collective Kitchens with Latin American women. The extent of participation also varied. For example, at one end there was one collaborator who had very extensive experience with both types of Kitchens, those with Latin American women and those with mainstream Canadian women. Also, at the other end there was another collaborator who participated in Collective Kitchens in two opportunities, both times with different groups. In this last case, her first participation experience was with a mixed group formed by two non-Latin American immigrant women and an English speaking Canadian woman. Her second participation experience was with group exclusively made of Latin American women. The other collaborators, however, participated for more than six months in Collective Kitchens.

Methods

The primary methods of data collection utilized in this study were: interactive interviews, document analysis, participant observation and documentation as well as reflecting through journaling (See Figure 3.2 for details).

The first part of the research was related to finding sufficient background information about the phenomenon, Collective Kitchens. The second part was related to documenting and analyzing how Collective Kitchens have been experienced by the collaborators. Valuable insights from key informants and more document analysis became also important during this second stage. It needs to be mentioned, however, that the process was not linear. A fundamental part of the process of research was to clarify issues related to the phenomenon itself, that is Collective Kitchens. Details are provided in Figure 3.2 to clarify the process.

Figure 3.2 : Data Collection

Part One: Background information.

Participant observation
. Collective Kitchens, two sessions (Casa Celeste and Other agency).

Documents 1.
. Video viewing, reflecting on transcripts: "Stir it Up", "Comedores Populares San Juan de Lurigancho."
. Publication: The Pink Report, 1994 (Casa Celeste).

Part Two: Collaborators' experiences.

Interviewing.
. Interactive interviews with five collaborators (CK participants).
. Collaborator/Key Informant interview: Johanne.
. Collaborator/Key Informant interview: Maria.

Documents 2.
. Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec (French translation).

Participant observation

The researcher participated in two Collective Kitchens, one at Casa Celeste and one at another agency. Participant observation was pursued to increase awareness, as a tool to become more sensitive about the experience "Collective Kitchens." Participation increased a practical form of awareness that helped the researcher to understand better what the collaborators shared in their interviews.

My level of participation varied. For example, during my first experience I just helped the members of a Collective Kitchen group while they were cooking. During my second experience I was a member of the group itself and as such participated in the planning and cooking, not in the shopping, phases of a Collective Kitchen. I gained familiarity with Collective Kitchens but not enough to render the phenomenon unproblematic. Collective Kitchens were an unknown entity in my view and I wanted them to remain that way until I started the collaboration process and I had the opportunity to reflect upon the interviews. I wanted Collective Kitchens to remain a nagging "itch" without an explanation, as one of my advisors said, in order to keep me curious.

Interviewing through collaboration

The method of interviewing both the participants and the key informants was collaborative. Collaborative interviewing implies that the interviewer and the interviewee are of equal importance in the study. To facilitate clarity throughout the reporting, in this study the participants will be referred to as collaborators and key informants will remain identified as key informants.

Participants

Interviews were individual, open ended and interactive, and carried out from June till September, 1995. In this section more details are provided about the interviews with the five participants who were aware that more than one interview was probably needed.

The interviews were always arranged with the participants' interest as priority; for example, their time and needs were explicitly considered first and this was mentioned to them. In general, however, once the participants agreed to a meeting they kept it. On one occasion, for example, I phoned a participant to confirm our second meeting that was to be the next day. As considerable time had elapsed, I decided to phone the participant. She told me that she had completely

forgotten about our meeting. I was concerned, at the time, that the participant may had second thoughts about our interview and might be reluctant to cancel it. I let her know that she had a right to cancel if so she wished; but, she explained that personal circumstances, unrelated to our interview, had her worried. We arranged a new date. During our next meeting, the participant shared the circumstances that worried her, and as she had said, they were unrelated to our interview.

An interviewing guide was developed to ensure that some of the issues that seemed relevant to the study were discussed (See Appendix B). The participants were, however, encouraged to discuss the topic as they wished to. The opening question was for this reason general, such as: Tell me about your experience with or within Collective Kitchens. Participants often asked for more specific questions. For example, a participant commented that she had so many experiences with Collective Kitchens that she wouldn't know where to begin. In this situation, I would ask the participant to just share with me what she felt comfortable sharing, leaving the participant to select the direction. If a situation of uncertainty persisted for the participant, I resorted to the guide and asked a question.

Often it seemed that to some participants Collective Kitchens were puzzling and this made it challenging for them to answer a general question. In these cases, more specific questions were used to maintain the flow of the interview. Interviewing may have helped participants to reflect about Collective Kitchens, and it may have encouraged a level of analysis about Collective Kitchens that may not have occurred otherwise. The subject of the research may have appeared excessively "everyday," even trivial to them.

Key informants

Two key informants were interviewed. One key informant was Maria, and the other was Johanne Talbot who was a visitor from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec. Their interviews were based on open ended questions. Johanne Talbot,

visiting from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec, had time for just one interview as her visit was short and her schedule very busy. Maria, a key informant, was interviewed after interviews with participants had ended; her interview was helpful in clarifying issues and increasing understanding about the perspectives shared by participants. Much of the information shared by Maria was indeed very valuable and it would have been very influential in terms of the direction of this research had it occurred prior to the interviews with participants.

Document analysis

Analysis of the documentary entitled "Stir it Up" (NFB, 1994) was completed for two reasons: important information concerning the history of Collective Kitchens in Canada was extracted from the documentary, furthermore valuable information about how Collective Kitchens are perceived, their image, some of the underlying assumptions, are subject to analysis. Embedded in this documentary, and shared with the Canadian public, are values, beliefs, assumptions that could be interpreted as the public image of Collective Kitchens. "Stir It Up" provides a public image of Collective Kitchens in English-speaking Canada. Analysis can increase awareness about it and render more conscious and more visible some of these assumptions and values. (For details, see Appendix C).

Transcripts from another documentary, entitled "Comedores Populares San Juan de Lurigancho", also served as documentation about Comedores Populares of Peru. The information obtained from its transcripts provided useful information about the portrayal of Comedores Populares. This information was used primarily in the review of the literature. The transcripts of "Comedores Populares San Juan de Lurigancho are in Appendix D.

Document analysis of the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992) was completed. These included both rank analysis of topics by page allocation and content analysis. Document analysis helped to discover the technical focus and

general orientation of this document, which is widely used in implementing Collective Kitchens. (For more details, see Appendix E).

Document analysis of the publication from Casa Celeste entitled "The Pink Report" (Casa Celeste, 1994b) was also performed. In this document members of Casa Celeste provide information about the organization, as well as about their personal experiences with the organization. Valuable information regarding the organization' s philosophy, mission, and vision were extracted from this document. This information was considered relevant to this study and reported within the findings but not analyzed any further.

Finally, the last document analyzed was the 1993-1994 report published by the Regroupment des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec (1994). This document provided valuable information which was generally included in the review of the literature. The report was helpful in confirming much of the information provided by Johanne Talbot (1995), during her interview. Furthermore, although collaborators were generally not in contact with people from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec, none of them discussed the Coalition, information about the Coalition increased my understanding about Collective Kitchens.

Journaling

Journal entries were written after each interview to ensure that impressions and events that may have not been recorded otherwise were on record. Journal writing also provided a place for reflection; the challenges encountered through the research process were documented in journals. Document analysis was also documented within the journal as this was an appropriate manner to reflect, keep records and analyze. For example, the analysis of The Pink Report (Casa Celeste, 1994b), a publication of Casa Celeste where the organization's history, philosophy, and programs are documented, was recorded as a journal entry in a separate booklet.

The journal entries, including impressions and concerns of the researcher and a place for reflection about the research, served the purpose of providing documentation about the research process.

Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher completed two levels of data analysis. The first level was inspired by applying the ecological framework to the collaborators' comments. More detail regarding the first level of analysis is included in the next paragraphs. The findings are reported within Chapter Four, Findings. The second level of data analysis integrated collaborators, key informants, document analysis and the researcher's understandings. More detail regarding the second level of analysis is described in the last paragraph of this section. Results from the second level analysis are reported in Chapter Five, Discussion.

For level one data analysis, the process by which thematic areas emerged and themes, as well as, sub themes were uncovered in the data, was ongoing. The process continued until thematic areas were identified, temporarily exhausted and the researcher had a comprehensive and holistic understanding of Collective Kitchens. Collaborators provided their descriptions of Collective Kitchens and they indicated, through verbal and nonverbal communication, that their descriptions were complete. Therefore, the dialogue concluded naturally and further questions, when asked by the researcher, resulted in no new data.

A general review of the transcribed interviews was performed. This was crucial in gaining familiarity with the material and in starting to uncover similarities and differences in the perceptions shared by collaborators. The ecological framework was identified for this level of data analysis. It added breath and context to the study. At the same as time thematic areas emerged other themes and sub themes related to each of the thematic areas, such as the concerns of collaborators who participated in Collective Kitchens regarding language and/or their children

and which were related to their identity as immigrant women. Or their varied understandings of "community" which were related to the fourth thematic area but also highlighted the relevance of meanings within Collective Kitchens.

Main thematic areas were identified and findings were sorted into the different spheres identified within the ecological framework. For example, collaborators' references connected to the personal or individual aspect of their lives became part of the first or innermost sphere of the framework, while, references more specific to Collective Kitchens became part of the sphere that follows, or second thematic area. There were also references made by collaborators about the organization that implemented Collective Kitchens, which became part of the third thematic area or sphere.

Finally, in level one data analysis, references about community that included the geographical area, the community of origin and the development of "community", became part of the fourth thematic area or sphere while references to socioeconomic and cultural aspects became part of the fifth. From the individual, or more micro level thematic area, to the socioeconomic and cultural, or most macro level one, the framework became crucial in the process of clarification undertaken by the researcher. The framework encouraged reflection about each thematic area, and, about connections they may have had with other areas within the framework.

During a second level of analysis of the data, findings emerged from the researcher's understanding. These were integrated with the forms of knowledge that were reviewed in the literature and three formats of Collective Kitchens resulted. The salient issues that emerged from the application of the ecological framework are made explicit and also discussed in Chapter Five.

Ethical Issues

The names and phone numbers of the collaborators were provided to the researcher by a key informant. She contacted the collaborators and explained that

a student, who was from the University of Alberta, was doing research for her thesis. The key informant added that the student was interested in Collective Kitchens and in discussing experiences that individuals had had in them. She asked them whether I, the student, could contact them. If they agreed, she gave me their phone numbers and I proceeded with contact. Six Latin American women were contacted and five agreed to the research; one refused because as she was working during the evenings and she had no available time. A meeting to discuss details of the research, confidentiality, consent and their right to privacy was arranged.

The interviews were to be taped. A collaborator was slightly uneasy about the use of a tape recorder. She explained that her children had teased her about her low tone taped voice and that made her slightly self-conscious. She became less concerned when I explained to her that in all likelihood I would be the only person listening to the tapes because I was transcribing them myself.

An information sheet, regarding the research, and a consent form were developed to meet some of the ethical requirements of the study. They were both discussed with the collaborators to their satisfaction; the consent form was signed and filed, for details see Appendix A. A date was arranged for the first interview; often, the collaborators wanted to have their first interview on that first contact and so the first interview followed. There were two rounds of interviews; a total of ten interviews lasting on average an hour each were performed.

Reliability and Validity

In interpretive studies validity is linked to credibility, or producing findings that are plausible, and to transferability from one context to another depending on the degree of fit between contexts (Guba, 1981). Validity is the overall concept used to refer to how good an answer a study yields. A concern has to do with whether the answer provided by the research is sound; and, if the internal procedures used in the research distort reality (Field & Morse, 1985).

Reality, however, is understood in this study as a "possibility". Therefore, the issue becomes whether the interpretation put forth in this study contributes to a better understanding of Collective Kitchens. Ultimately interpretation is always from a position and pre understanding is a prerequisite for understanding as well as the result of a dialectic process between text(s) and reader (Hekman, 1984). In this study audiovisual material, their transcripts, and other written documents and interview transcripts, as well as brief participatory observation, were involved in the research process; all can be understood in terms of text(s) interpreted by a reader, the researcher.

Reliability in interpretive and/or qualitative research has to do with dependability and confirmability. Dependability is determined by the stability of data and checked using methods that overlap. Confirmability has to do with objectivity/subjectivity and is checked by practicing reflexivity and discussing the inquirer (Guba, 1981). In this study, reliability is strengthened by the characteristics of the researcher, or the data gathering instrument. The researcher's familiarity with the cultural background of the collaborators, her knowledge of their native language adds strength to the study design and implementation.

To strengthen the validity of the study, the person more experienced in the organization with Latin American Collective Kitchens, became a collaborator in the study. The design is strengthened by triangulation of methods and data sources. For example, interviews, document analyses and participant-observation helped in encouraging the first form of triangulation, while data collection from collaborators, from personal experience, and from documents encouraged the second form.

In summary, this study followed an interpretive method and the data are words that follow a form of knowing that is situational and concerned with insights into human experiences and understanding of meanings (Aoki, 1987; Field & Morse, 1985; Gilgun, 1992). Included are assumptions that are congruent with feminism by

making women's experiences a valid focus of research, departing from the understandings of women and selecting collaboration between participants in the research and researcher (Olesen, 1994).

Furthermore, data collection for the study was based on an emergent ecological framework particular to this research situation. The framework added breath and context to the study, and encouraged holistic and contextual dcta analysis. There were two levels of analyses. The first level of analysis is reported in Chapter Four and the second is discussed in Chapter Five. The profile of collaborators, ethical issues and issues related to reliability and validity were discussed within this chapter.

Chapter Four

Findings

The collaborators' responses to the question, "How are Collective Kitchens experienced?" are presented within this chapter. A first level of data analysis was completed by using the ecological framework to view collaborators' responses from a holistic perspective. The common and distinct sub themes and themes are reported within thematic areas. The thematic areas helped to integrate sub themes and themes perceived as having a common focus. For example sub themes and themes more specifically connected to participants as individuals are reported within the first thematic area. Thematic areas provided labels for the spheres of the ecological framework inspiring the emergence of a specific ecological framework in connection to Collective Kitchens.

The ecological framework, described in the methodology, begins at a micro level or individual perspective and continues to a macro level or societal perspective. The ecological perspective, which highlighted the importance of the interdependence and connections among the different thematic areas encouraged the perception of the complexity of Collective Kitchens. In this chapter, therefore, findings are presented within thematic areas, themes and sub themes.

The first emergent thematic area was *Participants: Immigrant women*. This thematic area included findings that were closely related to the collaborators' personal experiences. The second emergent thematic area was *Collective Kitchens*. This thematic area included findings that were particularly connected to collaborators' experiences within Collective Kitchens. The third emergent thematic area was *The Sponsor: Casa Celeste*. This thematic area included findings related to Casa Celeste itself; it is important to notice that only three collaborators, Magenta, Maria and Marita, discussed aspects related to Casa Celeste probably because of their familiarity with the organization. The fourth emergent thematic area was

Community. This thematic area included findings related to the community where Casa Celeste is located. It also included collaborators' understandings of community. Finally, the last or fifth emergent thematic area was *Socioeconomic and Cultural aspects*. Within this thematic area themes and sub themes connected to both socioeconomic and cultural aspects, as discussed by collaborators, were included.

Thematic area 1- Participants: Immigrant women

Chan-Marples (1993) pointed to the term immigrant women as a very general term which has been often used interchangeably with the term visible minority women. Such term is generally used by members of the dominant culture to refer to women who have migrated from countries with non-white populations. The term is seldom applied to white, anglo-phone, Christian, Western women who have entered Canada from Northern Europe, or the United States, although they are also immigrants. The collaborators, however, perceived themselves as immigrants primarily because of their lack of fluency with the English language. Nevertheless, their experience is complex and includes more than the challenge of language as the following themes illustrate.

One even says: I can speak English!

Language was mentioned by the majority of the collaborators. It is challenging to learn a new language and it takes time for people to realize the importance of learning English.

The following quote from Dalila is illustrative of how challenging is to learn a new language:

> "One manages (with time). One even says: "I can speak English!" One says so! But, then one gets to another place and new words...One feels frustrated!" (Dalila 2, 5).

Furthermore, Marina assumed a connection between being an immigrant and not being able to speak English. Furthermore, she explains why it takes often long time before immigrants are able to speak English. She said:

> "Immigrants do not know the language. That is a problem." "When one arrives...(one doesn't worry too much) about going to school because one worries about finding a job first and setting up one's home and later one says: "Well, I have too many problems because I need a person to translate for me even to go to the doctor, to go to the bank, to go here and there." Every place one goes one needs an interpreter and one gets tired of asking and searching for people to help you translating for you. One wants to get ahead and one wants to study but one can't because of that (lack of courses)." (Marina 2, 3).

Importantly, the level of language achieved was related, in the view of Adelaida, to level of previous education. She perceived that only through education language was learned well but she mentioned that other issues acted as barriers in people's pursue of language learning. She said:

> "Soon they (those with higher level of formal education) will be back in their level. But, people like myself who had no opportunities in our country have a harder time. We do not even know how to study."...That lost time sometimes hurts me. What a fool! When I came I should have studied and today I would speak English well. I would have...My life would be different...I never tried to enroll. After I received my basic three months at the college I didn't enroll in anything else. In those days I had a part time job but my husband stopped me because my youngest daughter went missing twice. He didn't want me to work as a janitor because I had my trade...(He said:) "I work to give her everything so she has no need to work. I want her to stay home with the children." But the truth was that he didn't like me to work as a janitor." (Adelaida 2, 2).

According to Marita, however, opportunities for language training in the host country were limited and not offered to everyone. She explained how she never had the opportunity to receive language training in the following quote:

> "Then I never studied here. Eighteen years that...They have never given me a course...Since I arrived here: to work! Without speaking English. I made beds. In 1977 I arrived and in 1978 I started to work at a hotel. There a person used to write down the names of things: broom, sheets and soap. One day a lady asked me for shoe polish and I took her a bar of soap...She was so upset! Because I couldn't understand!" "Because they have not given us English courses. That is the problem. Since I arrived I have never received English...I prefer working (now) than studying. And the little English I know I learned it working not studying. Yes, in my work. Although I speak badly but I speak! I

> can at least defend myself. And there are so many people who still, close to my age, and they cannot defend themselves either. They do not know and sometimes the husband speaks and the woman doesn't and sometimes the wife speaks and the man doesn't. Their own children fool them, us, when you do not know!" (Marita 1, 1).

Maria mentioned the importance of knowing English at a level that allowed for meaningful understanding of Canadian values. In her view language was crucial to this end. She said:

> "My God, I said, I am living here and was not aware of all the need, the needs, how people live, the things that interest them. Even the values of the people, of this society...One little by little starts to discover. I am still picking up things from everywhere, I do not finish" (Maria).

Making comparisons: Here, there, somewhere else

Making comparisons between their countries of origin and Canada was commonly observed among collaborators. There was an awareness about differences between both countries that encouraged collaborators to discuss and compare the "here", Canada, and the "there", country of origin, in terms of what was positive and not so positive in both places. For example, Magenta was happy to be in Canada, she said:

> "I am happy here in Canada. I have been happy here. I have found myself here! I have learned to be happy first, to be unhappy later, and here I stayed! I cannot explain myself what happens to me that I stay in this country. To me it has been wonderful, there is something that keeps me here. I often think (that) maybe I bring something from someone. Watching the mountains is wonderful to me. I am a person, I can tell you, with my character. That, I have! I get along with people and all that, but, at the same time I am independent. I enjoy going out in my car, take my camera and by myself, on the lake or wherever, I take pictures. But, by myself."(Magenta 1, 4).

Marita, however, felt vulnerable and alone. She said:

> "Yes. But if I needed, if I wished to go ask somebody else, another neighbour, they were not going to give me. First, because they didn't know me and then why were they going to give me? ...Yes, here who has, has and who doesn't have...too bad." (Marita 2, 1).

Similarly Dalila expressed concerns about life in Canada. She mentioned the changes she observed in her own family as proof that something encouraged people to act differently in the new country. She said:

> "Because even your family here, your family and it is your family! It is not like in your country! Communication (is an issue in) itself! Here I have my brother across the street and sometimes months have passed without me seeing him. Because, well, one is busier here. There are different reasons. Isn't it?" (Dalila 1, 5).

> I have some cousins, that in my country we were very close together. Here no. Well, sometimes I do not visit them because they are busy, they are working, the time I have free sometimes they do not have it free. All that. But another thing of importance is that the system changes people. It changes people! Sometimes is not that the person, because they say that the people comes just to get a lot of things. Sometimes is not that. Sometimes is the system here that...One...See? Sometimes, I think that we lack time to be able to, be able to get together. Too many demands!" (Dalila 1, 5).

> "However, in our country we can say that we live more poorly but we are more united. But here, that is, what happens is that here the community is not as united. Speaking of course of the Hispanic community. We are very far apart here."..."I think that among themselves (Canadian people) there is no community. To me there is no community among themselves either." ..."I feel quite different from the way (people) here are. And up to today I cannot get used to this system here. I miss (my country), I miss it! Well, for instance we...Here...That (the community) is what I miss! Because in my country I could, well maybe I was just going to the store but I could ask my neighbour if she could look after my children for a while. However, here that is very difficult. That is something that I miss here!" (Dalila 1, 5).

Marina, who didn't not consider the alternative of going back to her country of origin as an option for her and her family often felt alone. She associated this city with her unhappiness and, therefore, planned to move to another city in Canada or to another country. She said:

> "No. In my country I do not want to live because my country produces great fear in me. Great fear! I went there and I lived. I felt as if someone was going to kill me...as if someone was following me. I went to the countryside where my siblings lived. I love the countryside because I was born and raised in the countryside, but I went and I heard the dogs barking and I believed that the "chusma" (mob) or the countryside soldiers...And my children were far from me. And I couldn't sleep all night! ...I never felt well, not in the city nor in the countryside, nowhere"..."I have a sister in London (England) and she wants me to go there. But, I do not know. She tells me that schools over there are the same as here, that health care is the same as here. That over there I (will) have no problems. I wanted to...She was going to give me half the money of all the tickets so that I could go with my children but as I started to work in this job ...I have benefits, I cannot go if they do not give me holidays..." (Marina 2, 3).

Being concerned about one's children

Most collaborators referred to the importance they gave to their children. For example Adelaida's decision to work and/or study was greatly influenced by the reactions of her family members to her commitments. She expressed this in the following manner:

> "And when I started to go to school I couldn't continue to do that. I cooked the day before the food that we were going to eat that day. But they (husband and children) didn't like it. And I started to have difficulties with my husband. The truth is that I was studying but I couldn't concentrate myself on studying because of all that. I read pretty well, I read a lot. But pronunciation is difficult." (Adelaida 2, 2).

Marina's decision to move to another country or city was dependent upon finding financial support for her family. She said:

> "I cannot pick up my luggage and go because I have three children. I need some support in order to decide to leave (Canada) but I cannot be happy here. I have what i want...If I need to get a dress I can do it, but, that doesn't fulfill my life! If I want to buy a ring, or a chain I could do it but what for if that doesn't have any value to me." (Marina 2, 3).

Magenta expressed her concern for her only child in the following manner:

> "The first thing that makes me love life was my daughter! My daughter who is for me everything! Beyond my daughter there is nothing. There has been no one ever beyond my daughter. My mother at the same level of my daughter. My father too, he has been a good friend with all my siblings...." (Magenta 2, 4).

Collaborators' decisions regarding their participation in Collective Kitchens were influenced by their children's reactions to the food they made in the groups and often by their children's perceptions of Collective Kitchens. Maria particularly noted that children were a dominant concern for Latin American women in Collective Kitchens. She said:

> "Hispanic women are always very concerned with what their children are going to eat. We plan a day before to make the budget and always someone said: "I would like to cook this or that because my children love this..." All their lives Hispanics, Hispanic women, worried about their children, or sometimes about their husbands: "We like to eat this, so, we could make it!" However, on the other side, Canadian women never worried about this. They

> didn't care whether the food was accepted by their children they took it anyway. Hispanics always worried about what their children liked" (Maria).

Marina and Dalila also expressed their views regarding the importance of children's enjoyment of the food prepared within Collective Kitchens. Both expressed their concerns in the following quotes:

> "They (children) like all that because, that is, because they learn to eat things from different countries. And, and meals that are healthy!...They were very happy when I arrived with all my dishes. They were glad and ate. They ate the food" ...Yes to them it was a good occasion because...They used to go to school and I to my Kitchen. When I returned I brought with me all my dishes...The basket with all my trays and things and the food already made. To them it was a banquet! Yes! And it was something new because I used to...Sometimes one varies but not with great frequency does one varies the food that one makes, but only sometimes. To them: they like to eat different things" (Marina 1, 3)

> "Oh yes, (the children like it)! Particularly when we did chicken, tacos, things like that they liked...We in the group of Latinas tried to cook food that our children also liked. See? Because one is always thinking in the children. See?...Then we always tried to...For instance, if someone said: "let's cook this" and (someone else said) "No, because my child doesn't like it" and...We got along well together. I think that we got along well together. We never had any problem, any contradiction"..."And I repeat we all have to like them (recipes), to us and to our families. That was always a very important thing that we maintained because that was very important to us. It was very important to us" (Dalila 1, 5).

Loneliness: The good, the bad

Isolation or feelings of loneliness were discussed by collaborators as relevant to their lives. Two different views emerged one positive and the other one negative; both are illustrated in this section. Magenta was the only collaborator who interpreted loneliness in a positive manner and associated with feelings of well being.

The good

For example, regarding loneliness as good Magenta said:

> "I enjoy that peace, and that loneliness which is so mine! Because it is mine...but, I enjoy loneliness. Nothing of communities, nothing of Kitchens, nothing of nothing! Who knows what life is? To me life has been very interesting. But, life has so many ups and downs. I have learned many things here that I had not learned there (her country), because I have had more freedom here than there. In one's land there is not much freedom because our mothers are always over us. Isn't it? In those days there was no

community, or those things. So, to me there have been great opportunities (here)" (Magenta 1, 4).

Most collaborators, however, viewed loneliness as negative and described feelings of frustration and sadness associated with it. This most common and negative understanding of loneliness was expressed by Adelaida, Marina and Dalila.

The bad

The following quote illustrates Adelaida's perception of loneliness. She said:

> "If you could see that at times I feel sad here in Canada because, when one is not able to speak English..I love to be with people. I love to have to speak with them (but) because of the little English I know...Sometimes that makes me feel frustrated...." (Adelaida 1, 2).

Marina's view was also negative; it included her concerns about the loneliness she perceived in her own children, consequence of having few close family members in Canada. She said:

> "I do not want this, this city. I do not know. It could be that I do not have my family. I feel very lonely. I would like that my children could go visit their uncles, to go play with their cousins. That they go, they have nobody. For instance, yesterday my uncle came and soon, Monday, they leave. My daughter said: "Ay mom, I hate that a loving person would come and leave so fast." Because, they also feel lonely!" They (children) spend so much time at home. The only thing that helps them is the TV. And those Nintendo games. But that is not a life for them. They have to go out, to talk, to have a social life! They need that! Not only...I have them enclosed here. They need to play, to run, to feel that they can do things by themselves" (Marina 2, 3).

In Dalila's view loneliness is compounded by the lack of meaningful relationships with the people who live nearby, such as neighbours. She said:

> "Of course I have my neighbours. I know them because I see them, that is it! However, one big barrier is the language, for that, for human relationships. Yes, that is one of the most important aspects of that. Because sometimes we feel, like they say "ashamed" to talk with our neighbour because we think that we will not use appropriately the language. That we are going to speak wrongly. All that weights on our decision (to not make contact). All that affects you and puts you in a bad mood. All that I think has an effect" (Dalila 2, 5).

Having goals and maintaining hope

Only one collaborator, Marina, discussed her goals in some extent. For example, she mentioned plans to move to another city and to one day install her

own small business. Furthermore, only one collaborator, Adelaida, extensively discussed her hopes. For example, she explained how her hopes had changed since her arrival from a wish to continue with her work at designing and making children clothes, to learning to speak the language to a level that would help her to perform a type of work that she could enjoy.

Goals discussed

Marina's goals were related to her financial improvement. She planned both to move to another city, either a city she liked more or a city where her sister lived, because of her unhappiness, and to be able to start her own business. She said:

> "Yes. Yes. I have always...I have a goal and I know that I am going to get there. I say: I am a person who has cleaned, has worked. If I have to work, but, I want to get ahead. I do not want to be always the same person or living within the same standard. I want to arise. And I have a goal and I know I am going to get there. My goal...The first thing is to move from here because I do not feel happy or content, because of the solitude I feel here. The second goal is to have a business and from that business to be able to live..."(Marina 2, 3).

Maintaining hope

Adelaida discussed how her hopes had changed as the ones she previously had failed to materialize. In time the focus of her hopes moved from her achievement of integration to work in an activity she liked to a new focus on her children's achievements and opportunities for improvement through education. She said:

> "I was going to school with the hope of learning the language well, because I am too old to do very heavy work. I would like to cut or create new models, like designing (she did that before). I would love that but I think that is asking too much because at my age I do not think I can make it. I need good working knowledge of English, it is what the teacher told me."(Adelaida 2, 2).

> "My husband used to say that soon "We are going to buy a sewing machine so that you can continue to..", but no. With these big shopping centers you need a lot of money to do that (have your own business). So, all that made me feel like if, like if I have done nothing...If I stayed in Costa Rica (second country) I would have my own shop over there. But then...Maybe I have not done all that but, well, the children have...I do not know, they have learned another language. They are preparing themselves. Well, with the help of God

> they will make it since I couldn't. That 's the illusion I have now, in them. That they make it. This is not for us, this is for them and that is my struggle with them, that, that they learn even some skills but that they learn something. That they prepare themselves because to be honest in Costa Rica it was very difficult. Maybe I could have paid my way there because...but it was very difficult to live there." (Adelaida 2, 2).

In summary, five themes were identified and illustrated within the first thematic area. Those themes were: the challenge and importance of learning English for the collaborators, the tendency to compare collaborators' country of origin with Canada, collaborators' general concern with their children's well being, collaborators' experience of loneliness, and the theme of goals and/or hopes. The experiences of collaborators as participants within Collective Kitchens is connected, naturally, with their identity as individuals or as immigrant women.

Thematic area 2- Collective Kitchens

Within this thematic area the findings more specifically related to the collaborators' experience within Collective Kitchens emerged. The first emergent theme was collaborators' understandings of or the meanings they gave to Collective Kitchens.

Different understandings of Collective Kitchens

Collaborators' meanings of Collective Kitchens centered around two main aspects, included in the definitions made by the majority of them. These common aspects are: cooking, or the activity performed within the groups, and the collective, or the importance and value of the group.

Marina described Collective Kitchens in terms of the cooking as well as in terms of the existence of collaboration among group members. She said:

> "The good about the Collective Kitchens, and the good things that there are, that one can cook nutritive food with...that it costs less money! That is the food doesn't cost much and it is made. That is the cost, what one pays, around two dollars, and one gets six dishes for those two dollars. One prepares five or six dishes of different food. We are a group of many women and we are all mothers. We have 4, 6, or 7 children. And each one takes six different dishes home. We can also freeze the food. It only needs to be heated! That is the most important part. It is food that is nutritive for children,

> because it is food made from beans and its products, lentils and chicken peas" (Marina 1, 3).

> "Because we work together in a group. Because we give, we bring something! That is, we can collaborate. That is each one brings a recipe. Each one gives an idea and each puts something! That, it is like a unity. Isn't it? That is like a group of people that gets together to work on something. That is how we are all united making everything to eat ourselves" (Marina 1, 3).

Dalila described Collective Kitchens in terms of the encouragement of cooperation among participants, an aspect that she perceived as positive. She said:

> "Well, I think that a Collective Kitchen is the coming together of a group of different people. The coming together of people who speak Spanish, or of Canadians or from another country that...I, well, the word says it: collective. Isn't it? So, and the planning of different (meals), the picking up of different ideas from each of the persons within the kitchen. So, and to cook and each...So, among everybody: to divide the work" (Dalila 1, 5).

Magenta described Collective Kitchens in terms of the quality of the groups; to her having a good time and being happy within the group was valuable. She said:

> "A Collective Kitchen is a community kitchen that benefits many people. Where you pass most of the time happy. Where one knows that it is in the benefit of the family and that we should be thankful to Casa Celeste behind us to continue the project. That it is to me" (Magenta 1, 4).

For Adelaida the important element was the people and the possibility to know and exchange with people in an informal setting. She said:

> "Well, the Kitchen...to me the Collective Kitchens is, how can I say it? It is a group that is trying to learn to cook but at the same time...How can I tell you? I do not know...Where we go to know other people. With people from other places! Where we have the opportunity to know each other. Not only cooking but knowing other people! From other countries! To exchange ideas, opinions, recipes. Everything that has to do with the kitchen" (Adelaida 1, 2).

Marita focused her definition of Collective Kitchens in both financial and collective aspects. She was concerned, however, with gender and she described Collective Kitchens as groups of women helping women. She said:

> "To me the Collective Kitchens are a financial thing for some people who...Many do not have enough money to buy their food and...To me is something, a work! Isn't it? A collective work that a group of women do and thanks to that one learns from others. Isn't it? From others because the truth is

> that I didn't know many recipes, but, there I learned to cook a lot! One learns to be with people, with people from a different culture from one's own, from one's own country. Isn't it? (Marita 1, 1).

Encouraging participation: From familiarity to curiosity

Participation and concerns with encouraging participation were discussed within this thematic area. Most collaborators noted that familiarity with the organization and its people played an important role in encouraging them to participate in Collective Kitchens. Marita decided to participate because everybody invited her. She said:

> "I decided to participate because well, everybody invited me. Isn't it? And Maria said: "Come, yes! You are good at cooking." And all that. And well I told her: "Yes, well, I am going to participate." It was also because Lynn told me that it would be good that I participated. In those days I was not working! I was there most of the time. Then it was easy to participate. Furthermore, Casa Celeste paid. One had to put ten dollars down and Casa Celeste put the rest of what it was spent. Then, a saving. Yes. And that was good. That of the Collective Kitchens is good!" (Marita 1, 1).

Dalila recognized that she learned about Collective Kitchens while participating in an employment preparation program at Casa Celeste. She said:

> "I found out because I was at Casa Celeste receiving...I was there doing a course. How was it called? Preparation for Employment. Well, I was there before. Some people have told me before, through other friends. I have noticed! Then I was there; I had the opportunity to join. They asked me and I had the opportunity to participate in the Collective Kitchens. That is they told me. They explained how everything was and if ...I participated many times, many times" (Dalila 1, 5).

The value of an effective coordinator for Collective Kitchens was recognized by collaborators in general. A quote from Adelaida best illustrates this aspect.

> "Look Norita, the truth is that when Maria invited me, she told me about Collective Kitchens. I didn't know about them because I have never had the opportunity to participate...And I loved the idea because I love...I loved when Maria motivated me. She told me about the program, she motivated me and that I was going to learn how other people, from other places cooked. Yes" (Adelaida 1, 2).

Often both, familiarity and the enthusiasm of the coordinator, had played a role in encouraging participation. A quote from Marina illustrates this as follows:

> "I found out through Maria, she phoned me that as I started to go there, I was working there like at child care. Then, I was working (there) like answering the phone. How do you say that? Hostess, hostess. I was working as a hostess. I was working also in child care and from there I was doing what they call Collective Kitchens" (Marina 1, 3).

Magenta was the only collaborator who mentioned that she participated in Collective Kitchens because of curiosity. In her view, the very existence of the Kitchens in Canada made her curious because she perceived important differences between perceptions of the poor in her country of origin and Canada. She said:

> "Well, only that when I saw for the first time that they started to cook...In the beginning I believed that the Collective Kitchens were not going to work. It looked strange to me that in this country people would accept to do a Collective Kitchen like the ones we have in our countries. In our countries there are poor people like here, but, we in our countries accept them. They do not want to accept it (poverty)" (Magenta 1, 4).

A learning experience

Most collaborators referred to their experiences within Collective Kitchens as learning experiences. Learning is divided into two sub themes because of the focus of the learning activity. For example, learning about techniques from each other is perceived as different from learning about developing the collective.

Learning cooking techniques from each other

Learning techniques about cooking, or the "what" of Collective Kitchens, as well as learning from each other, or the method of achieving that objective, the "how", were discussed by most collaborators.

Marina mentioned that she wished to learn more about cooking. She said:

> "Well, I what I...I began, isn't it? But my idea was to learn to cook more. As everyone brings a recipe one learns to cook! And then one is able to do one's own thing because then you do not need a recipe or anything because you know how to do it! And we learned a lot because we learned from each other. The one from the other and we shared. Because each one of us had something new to, that is, each person had her development, (and) develop her own thing" (Marina 1, 3).

Dalila was also interested in learning to cook. She noticed, however, that she also learned about saving and hygiene, areas that she found valuable. She expressed this as follows:

> "Well, I liked it because I learned things, many techniques that sometimes one doesn't know. Because often one wastes a lot and Canadians do not waste anything. That is something I saw there that Canadians do not waste anything...We sometimes have leftovers and we do not use them right away. We save them, we say, to make another food maybe at another time. But as days go by what we have in the fridge...we do not like it anymore and we throw it away"..."For instance we also received a course prior. That is we received a few classes about hygiene in the kitchen. They showed us some videos about how the food can be contaminated by bacteria. About the temperature we should be freezing our food so that it doesn't get bacteria."..."Sometimes one says that one can cook but really one can't. Yes, because I learned. For instance I learned from Maria. I learned many things, many things, from her and from my other friends I also learned. Sometimes, for instance, we make the meat in only one way, one the over or in steaks, and we do not move from there. There, I learned many things that I have never done. Isn't it? There I learned from my little group-mates. I learned" (Dalila 1, 5).

Adelaida, who felt confident that she had some valuable knowledge related to food preparation she could share with other women, described as valuable the opportunity that Collective Kitchens offered her daughters to socialize with other women and learn with them. She said:

> "The first day I felt very happy because...I wanted to learn how other ladies cooked and teach what I knew. And I even took my two daughters with me and they were very happy (too)....They liked it because they learned also. They participated and it is good. Because sometimes, when they are at home: "Ay mom why don't you do it yourself?" But, there in the group, and because they like to chat, then chatting with the ladies, then: "In what way can I help you?" And helping! And seeing how they (the women) were cooking. Because they like to learn too! And, I do not know, the youth is like they like to have somebody else teaching them (beside their mothers)"..."Because when they (daughters) cook at home they leave everything there..."Do you see how we are leaving the kitchen?...When one finishes cooking see how everything must be left?" "Yes, mom, everything must be left spotless" (laugh) Yes! Because at home when they cooked, when they cook, they leave everything there and then I have to come and clean. No, I say: "Whoever cooks must leave the kitchen very clean and clean the floor"" (Adelaida 1, 2).

Learning about each other: Developing the collective

Developing the collective, or the group, was perceived as valuable because the opportunities the group provided in learning to share and be with other people.

Magenta noted that Collective Kitchens encouraged people to know each other while providing for the opportunity to experience food from varied places and made by others. For example she said:

> "To be in the community of Collective Kitchens helps you to know people, to have new experiences, to have different recipes of meals for the future. To have a new experience with food that somebody else makes is very good because then one can extend the recipe towards other people" ..."One learns to get along with people who share with one. Isn't it? Or the other people (learn to get along) with us."..."I have seen they (Canadian women) have interest in learning something from us."..."Give them what? We have to be positive. If we have so much happiness, share it and you will see your happiness grow! Because you have now the happiness of having given so much to another person and your own happiness grew, giving to someone else!" (Magenta 1, 4).

In groups, such as Collective Kitchens, the opportunity to both teaching and learning existed. Marita said:

> "But, one learns from another person. And that is nice! Because one can also teach about one's own culture...And thanks to that one learns from others. Isn't it? From others because the truth is that I didn't know many recipes, but, there I learned to cook a lot! But is...also, one learns to be with people from a different culture, from one's own country. Isn't it?" (Marita 1, 1).

Dalila viewed the experience as positive because challenges can be met and overcome. The opportunity to "manage" those challenges is valuable. Dalila said:

> "Yes, very positive. Sometimes the place was tight. Sometimes the money was tight but we managed all that. To me there was nothing negative...(Dalila 1, 5).

Adelaida was particularly impressed by the opportunities that groups provided to participants. In her view groups generally encourage the development of self-confidence. She illustrated her view with a personal example:

> "How to learn to cook different types of food. Food from different countries! Because each one cooked food from their own country. Having met those

> people. To be so close with them and to know their way of thinking, talking..."..."And we forgot the time. We got there at around 9 and we left around 2! When I, we finished...I was well surprised because the time went and we didn't even feel it...When we started to talk it was, everybody chatting there, laughs. Happy! Look, it looks like dreaming but...Happy! All of us there! And that is what is good about groups! That is why I like groups! Because there are some people, as if they are scare to talk, as if someone is going to respond bad to them. But when they hear you talking! And then, it is as if they gain confidence!" (Adelaida 1, 2).

Maria, however, referred to the importance of Collective Kitchens' planning sessions. These sessions helped participants to identify ideas for other programs, or workshops, that Latin Americans women perceived as needed. She said:

> "Often, other programs were born when we met for the Collective Kitchens. I do remember that once we were really interested about the problems of social justice in our own countries. We chatted about that; precisely we talked with Pablo from Amnesty, so that he would take information from Amnesty there and help us discuss about it. Because we always talked about the problems of oppression, of hunger, of unemployment in our countries...He did a nice presentation about social justice, because he was very informed about the situation in Brazil and all that...We brought a Salvadoran lady who is also very much involved with the group Monsignor Romero, Analia, and she came to talk about war in El Salvador. We had people, a lot of people used to come to these presentations...And naturally this, because one saw this, during the next Collective Kitchen my desire to be able to organize the Collective Kitchens as it should really be returned to me" (Maria).

Steppingstones: Characteristics of a facilitator

Most collaborators, in discussing their views about their Collective Kitchens' coordinator, helped to identify characteristics perceived as valuable in an effective group coordinator. Each collaborator referred to at least one such characteristic; together the list is quite inclusive. The following characteristics were mentioned as valuable: the importance of defending the rights of participants, of being enthusiastic and of motivating participants, of being organized and providing moral and spiritual support to participants, of being kind and ensuring that participants in the group gained knowledge, while at the same time allowing for opportunities which permitted participants to develop their own capabilities.

The importance of having a coordinator who defends participants' interests was illustrated by Marita's comments in the quote that follows:

"After Maria left...at least I felt that strongly, because she always fought for our rights, for the rights of those who spoke Spanish. People was upset because of this. Isn't it? It is important that different kind of people be there, because we are all human and we need. Isn't it? " (Marita 1, 1).

The value that increasing participants' motivation level has, was noted by Adelaida in the following manner:

"She is very enthusiastic. She makes you feel that way too. She is a very happy person and when she is telling you about something that is going to begin she makes you feel that enthusiasm too. She motivates you! She raises your spirit! And then you wish to participate...People like that is needed to move people out of their isolation. Because there are many people who like to stay there but when they hear this kind of person they are moved out of their isolation and they wish to participate in these type of things but they do not have the magic: motivating other people!" (Adelaida 1, 2).

Magenta's comments illustrated the value of receiving moral and spiritual support from the coordinator. She said:

"Lynn was the first stepping stone there (Casa Celeste) and the second was Maria. And the two have been badly missed! They used to have that very well organized. They had very good projects. They helped people a lot in the moral aspect. They used to give us spirit so that one would come, to relax. So that one, wouldn't be enclosed within one's home. To have a better way of life" (Magenta 1, 4).

Finally, quotes from Marina and Dalila focused on some aspects of the Collective Kitchens coordinator's role that were related to education within the everyday life setting of Collective Kitchens. Marina said:

"She was a teacher to us! She used to say: Well, you are going to do...Everything was in order. Everything had its measure. Everything had its thing. That is, she...she was a very important person there. When she left from there...that is, Casa Celeste lost something big because she was very kind and, she is a very noble person, very good. She tries that everybody learns something, learns in the same measure. That is she used to teach us to make pickles, preserves, all those things! Because sometimes one arrived there...One didn't have anyone to talk with, whom to address? She was always attentive, she looked: do you need any help? Can I help you in anyway? What do you need? All that, like that" (Marina 2, 3).

Furthermore, Dalila said:

"She used to give us ideas. But she didn't cook with us, no. She only used to give us ideas, the money, isn't it? But, she no, at the time that we were cooking she no, (she) wasn't there. We used to cook alone. Well, she helped

> us if we needed help, because we asked her...that is, she was nearby, near there she used to be but not in the middle with us...She would say: What do you want that I tell you or...Well, you tell us one dish and we do the other ones. See? And she guided us on how to do it and all that" (Dalila 1, 5).

The value of enjoying Collective Kitchens

The importance of having an enjoyable experience became obvious throughout the dialogue with most collaborators. Enjoying Collective Kitchens appeared connected to two main elements: the atmosphere of the groups, which needed to be pleasant, and the success the group had in achieving goal(s) set by the group.

For example, Adelaida recognized that generally participants in her Collective Kitchens were kind to each other, making the setting enjoyable. She said:

> "And the ladies were very kind too. And I tried to be kind also, I tried to explain so that they will understand me. See? And that they will try my food too! Because I also cook well! (Laughs)" (Adelaida 1, 2).

The value of having a good time was discussed also by Magenta, who recognized that others went to Collective Kitchens probably with the same expectations of enjoying the experience that she had. She said:

> "They go to Collective Kitchens for the same reasons I go: for the company, for the community, for the communication. To be entertained a few hours in something that benefits also other people. That is what I think. They get together there and hours pass. It is a good time. It is ...one laughs and talks and makes jokes and even dances. It is interesting!" "Because one relaxes there. And who chopped the tomato and who the onion and give me that garlic...Did you take my cup? And it is ...one passes the time. It is a therapy. That is why one doesn't feel the hours when one is there. One doesn't feel that one is working" (Magenta 1, 4).

A successful experience can help participants by promoting self confidence. That challenges are successfully met is perceived by Dalila as positive. She described this experience with the term "managing". There were challenges in participating in Collective Kitchens but because the experience was enjoyable the outcome in Dalila's view was very positive. She said:

> "Yes, very positive. Sometimes the place was tight. Sometimes the money was tight but we managed all that. To me there was nothing negative. But as I say

> we do not think all in the same way. Because our group, the group of Latinas, we were very different from the Canadians. I had a very good time! I liked very much to assist. I liked it very much. I liked to go" (Dalila 1, 5).

Challenges that Collective Kitchens face

Collective Kitchens face challenges and collaborators referred to them. Some of the challenges were obvious to collaborators while other challenges were less explicit. The challenge discussed by most collaborators in this study was the challenge posed by the limitations of cooking space and utensils such as pots and/or pans. This challenge appeared, however, as generally manageable. Furthermore, Maria herself revealed that when Collective Kitchens started at Casa Celeste coordinators and participants were very aware that the space was limited and many cooking utensils were lacking but they refused to be stopped by this.

Lack of utensils and space as challenges

Lack of adequate number and variety of utensils, pots and/or pans, was described by most collaborators as challenging. Magenta was the most concerned with this situation because she was more aware than other collaborators that this lack had resulted from recent theft. Magenta said:

> "We do not have pots! They are lacking too much! There are no pots and pans in a word. They have all disappeared (stolen). Then it is not easy to cook and take from here in supermarket bags the skillets and the pots and the spoon and the knife, and when we finish cooking...I am going to wash them and I am missing two or three things. That cannot be! That doesn't go with me either!" (Magenta 1, 4).

Adelaida, Dalila and Marina also acknowledged the challenge of insufficient number and/or variety of pots and pans. Marina was more concerned with the issue, however, than Dalila or Adelaida were. Marina said:

> "We had problems with the pots in which we cooked. They burned many things. And that used to give us problems. Because if the rice was a bit too high, or that is, too hot, the stove was set a bit too high, it burned right away the food. That, yes, it was an inconvenient that we had there."..."Well, it was too small, the kitchen. That is each one of us used to have a place. First we used to cook one thing and then the other because there were different dishes so we had to move around...We had to cook everything almost at the same time" (Marina 1, 3).

Dalila, however said:

> "Well, the kitchen was a bit small for the four or five people who were working. Yes, the kitchen. We used to be in each other's way. Yes, that was, very small space. We found it small. And sometimes...we, it depended. As we already knew what was there (in terms of the pots and pans available)...If we were going to need something (pot/pan) extra then we took it (from home). See? We took it! (Dalila 1, 5).

To which Adelaida added the following:

> "To me the only difficulty was the lack of enough pots and pans. There were certain ingredients missing too. Small things that they didn't have and then the lady (cooking) put something else. It didn't taste bad though. It was very tasty! (Adelaida 1, 2).

Planning can be challenging

A challenge identified through analysis of the dialogue with Dalila was planning. Planning is generally expected to last for about two hours, according to the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992). Dalila's discussion of her group planning sessions provided some evidence that planning was challenging. It is challenging to prepare nutritive food, that participants and their families accepted and liked, while meeting budget requirements. Three challenging elements, such as cost of food, taste preferences and nutrition, must be balanced during the planning session. Each of these elements presented participants with challenges. Probably the most limiting of the three, however, is food's cost and available funds. For example, Dalila referred to the overriding need to always look for the most comfortable, or lower, price in the following quote:

> "We couldn't go beyond certain amount of money. Now, if we went beyond the amount we had to put the difference. But, but what...the ideal there was that we wouldn't go beyond the amount of money that they gave us. Isn't it?...Well, sometimes we passed almost two hours there planning...We used to go to buy and...we looked for the most comfortable (price). Always looking for what was most comfortable (less expensive). Isn't it? So, in this way, and we used to take all the receipts, everything so they will see them"..."Yes, because of the budget. Yes, because that was what Maria used to say, that we had to, within what they gave us. I can remember how much it was, but, within what they gave us we had to find the way of not going beyond. Well, if it was 25 or 50 cents it was fine; we could put them from our pocket because they didn't give us more than that. So, we were always looking,

> searching; we used to take the recipe book, the ideas: "What do you think we can do?" We put down all the different dishes, we marked seven, eight, nine dishes. Then, we decided which were the best" (Dalila 1, 5)."

Budgeting can be challenging

Collective Kitchens emphasize budgeting. The following quote from the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992) can illustrate that well.

> "Participants in the collective kitchens are selected by the neighbourhood sponsor. Single-parents, adults with mental health concerns and parents of low-income families who could benefit from and contribute to a group cooking experience have been recruited" (EBH, 1992, p.36).

Collaborators also noted the budgeting emphasis of Collective Kitchens. Marita, who participated in Collective Kitchens with both Latin American and Canadian women, discussed that. She also questioned the amount of money provided. The limited amount of funds was, in her view, the main reason for increased stress and conflict within the groups. She argued that if Collective Kitchens were implemented to help people in need, the amount of help provided should be more generous in order to reduce the stress on participants and make the experience of cooking together more enjoyable. She said:

> "Yes, we had to...I accompanied them to buy and we had to buy all this. Isn't it? And sometimes the money was not enough, or the food! Then we made less and we had conflicts."... "Because if this program is for people of low resources they should help each other more! The help should, for example, be 20 dollars and the participant should pay around 15 dollars then you would have 35 dollars or so (to manage). Because right now you cannot eat with five dollars. Because it is assumed that each dish costs around seven dollars. Isn't it? But, here you cannot eat with seven dollars" (Marita 1, 1).

The challenge of developing quality relationships

In Marita's view budget limitations were detrimental to the development of meaningful group relationships. Budgeting became overwhelmingly central; often, lack of sufficient money to cover costs or buy sufficient foodstuffs generated conflict. Marita believed that this was particularly the case for participants who were experiencing very difficult times; that is, for women who were experiencing much

need. For example, the women with the greatest need for food were more likely to become concerned about the amount of food distributed.

Generally, Marita noted, simple techniques were not sufficient to solve the difficulties arising within the groups. Recommendations to calm down, for example, were ineffective in tackling the underlying concern about resources. Under conflict, the collective aspect of Collective Kitchens suffered. A different approach may be needed for conflict resolution, as well as specific attention to developing quality relationships. Marita reported the following:

> "Nor was the distribution done properly. Isn't it? For example if I paid fifteen dollars I have three children there were four portions that I had right to...And they said the money was not the only distribution criteria, or sometimes if you had more children you received more and if you had fewer you received less and that...No!...Then there was a problem that we had there. I couldn't that is. I didn't want to continue to go. Because there was no order. Isn't it? Everybody wanted to tell others! Isn't it? (Marita 1, 1).

Marita has participated in many Collective Kitchens and she has found that often participants become upset, contributing to the challenge of developing quality relationships. For example, she said:

> "Well my experiences with Collective Kitchens are many. The first thing is that we work...different women from different countries all coming with our culture. Isn't it? Many became upset, some...everything seemed bad to them...Sometimes they were not punctual, they didn't get there on time or sometimes they will let you know at the very last minute that they couldn't participate..." Well, they show their...They all wanted to know! They all knew and at the same time they didn't know anything! Isn't it?" (Marita 1, 1).

It seems that at times the quality of relationships was quite challenged by the need to ensure sufficient food. The following quote illustrates this well:

> "Sometimes they told me you are three or sometimes they told me you are four (mouths to feed). But, I would be silent. To me the need wasn't that big. But to other people, yes! Isn't it? And that people who had strong need wanted more. Well, I was happy with whatever they gave me, because there were only ten dollars that I put, it wasn't much. But, how can I say it, to people with strong need, who didn't have, it was... it was good. They wanted more. Isn't it? If there is going to be a thing again, for instance, charge more like fifteen dollars. That everybody receives the same. Isn't it? And that the opportunity be given to the people who have need, those who do not have" (Marita 1, 1).

Punctuality as a reflection of interest in participating

A challenge noted and discussed by Magenta, a collaborator who was very familiar with Collective Kitchens, was the lack of punctuality of participants. Often participants either came late or not at all. They generally failed to let the coordinator know about their change of plans. This was pervasive enough to lead Magenta to the conclusion that people may not have been interested enough in Collective Kitchens. In her view they agreed to come but they later changed their minds because their interest was not sufficiently strong. The following quote from Marita is illustrative of the punctuality issue:

> "Maria always said that we had to be patient, we had to be patient. However, that was not the point, but, the point was to tell them how they had to come (to be punctual). Isn't it? And many of them tried the food by putting it on the palm of their hands. How can I tell you? To see if the food was ready? And I felt this as a big thing, a revulsion! Maria, always a good person, she always said: "We do not have to worry, we do not have to worry." Isn't it?"..."Then many people, sometimes it was 9 a.m. the time we had decided to do it and, it was 10 a.m. and nobody had showed up. Isn't it? Then, to be punctual is very important" (Marita 1, 1).

Magenta explained how lack of punctuality affected Collective Kitchens. In her view pervasive lack of punctuality and/or explanations for absences that sounded as excuses could be explained only by insufficient interest in participating in the groups. The following quote illustrates her views:

> "Because as they are not being punctual...some come and some do not come. Then in that way nothing can be done, because you have to budget. Isn't it? And if they fail, well, one has to look for the other person (to complete the group). If we are four and one fails then we have to look for the other one, the fourth person, and that cannot be! This is, punctuality is required. But unfortunately, at times it can be done and at times it cannot."...."They do not come because they have a headache, or a toothache, or their child is coughing or...They come up with...because they simply do not have any interest. They do not have interest that day or they feel idle for whatever reason! Latinas simply do not go, do not go there! Without having the kindness, the responsibility...(of letting you know)...Nothing! " (Magenta 1, 4).

Furthermore, the new coordinator of Collective Kitchens with Latin American women at Casa Celeste was experiencing difficulties in encouraging Latin American

women to participate in her groups. When asked about her difficulties she noted that she perceived more than one reason which made it challenging to promote Collective Kitchens among Latin American women. In her view, among these reasons the main could be lack of interest. Food is first to us, she said, and the rest just follows, "la comida es lo primero, despues sigue todo lo demas". Few Latin Americans in Canada would face food shortages of the magnitude needed to make it desirable for them to participate in Collective Kitchens simply for the food. She believed that the need for food was never in itself the incentive for Latin American women' s participation in Collective Kitchens. However, she noted, for some Canadian participants food could be closely related to their reasons for participating in Collective Kitchens and its availability through Collective Kitchens a strong incentive for participating.

The political aspects: Developing consciousness and solidarity

Maria was concerned with an aspect that collaborators did not mention. That is, the "why" of Collective Kitchens was important to her. There are political aspects of Collective Kitchens that, in Maria's view, are not being addressed. For example, the importance of the development of participant's awareness about the connection between Collective Kitchens and poverty, or food insecurity and need are ignored. Maria perceived that the true purpose of Collective Kitchens was found in making this connection explicit. Collective Kitchens are connected to issues that are political; issues such as food shortage and poverty. Developing consciousness about this was as crucial as it was the development of solidarity among participants in Collective Kitchens; issues that were both, in her view, neglected. She noted the following:

> "Now to me, what was really important was to develop consciousness in the people, the why. Precisely the why of Collective Kitchens. Because it was not only about being together there "comadreando," happy and all that. Because it is a good moment, very nice. Because we help each other and all

> that, but, the why of Collective Kitchens. Why did we need of that? In those days, without even knowing about the Comedores Populares in Peru, that was my vision. How to enlarge and extend it, growing on/in that. That would have been a great thing for the times that we are now living, when people each day have less money. That type of organization would have been wonderful. Because it would be bigger. We would have money left like the Comedores Populares over there, that they finance everything by themselves..." "And there are many things, for instance that solidarity with one another, that sensibility of been able to see the need of others, of trying to help each other. That is what we have in Latin America, that of helping each other, not that egoism that this is mine and only mine, but to share with everyone. And many problems could have been solved, like financial difficulties, if we had organized them (Collective Kitchens) really as we should. The system is nice and all that, because one shares and is really cheap, is economical..." (Maria).

In summary, within this second thematic area issues more directly concerned with Collective Kitchens were discussed by collaborators. For example, issues related to their definitions of Collective Kitchens, their concern regarding participation as well as their perception of the possibilities for learning in a group setting as valuable were discussed. Furthermore, characteristics of the coordinator of Collective Kitchens that were perceived by collaborators as valuable were mentioned. The value of enjoying the experience of participating in Collective Kitchens for collaborators and the challenges faced by Collective Kitchens are described. The sponsor of these specific Collective Kitchens is discussed within the next thematic area.

Thematic area 3- The Sponsor: Casa Celeste

Only two collaborators, those who were more familiar and involved with Casa Celeste, referred to Casa Celeste's philosophy and to the challenges that the organization has faced or faces. For example, community development is included in the philosophy of Casa Celeste because Casa Celeste emerged from a community development project. This project was an initiative developed by a joint venture between a city large community college and a well known community services agency. Casa Celeste's definition of community development, extracted from the organization's publication, The Pink Report, is presented together with collaborators' comments and with key informant's insights (Casa Celeste, 1994b).

Philosophy: Community development

To illustrate how this philosophy is described by the organization, in their publication, a quote follows:

> "Each one learns from the other. Each one brings something special to the project. Each one wants to make life better for the people in the community. They work together. They laugh together. They cry together. That is community development" (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 48).

As mentioned only collaborators who were quite familiar with Casa Celeste discussed their perceptions of its philosophy. For example, Marita mentioned some aspects she perceived regarding the relationship between Casa Celeste and community development as follows:

> "And that Casa Celeste has never done it. It has never done it. They have never tried...but, Casa Celeste has never done that. The community for Casa Celeste, I believe, has not been an important part of their work. Vague. Not with interest so the community (truly) appears. Better said, or that it (community) moves forward. Do you see? Because the people who attends at Casa Celeste, for instance the coordinators, think about receiving their money and that's it! To them to do a good or a bad job is the same thing. Because they receive their money on the side. They do not live of what Casa Celeste pays them or of the people from the community. Going door to door explaining. It is the only solution. If they hide in there and never go out..." (Marita 2, 1).

Maria discussed the origin of the idea of paying some people participating at programs in Casa Celeste and her feelings regarding the views of Glenda, one of the founders of the initial project from which Casa Celeste would emerge. The quote that follows illustrates her views:

> "Then, they -Glenda had the idea: "Money gives power. If we manage to pay people those five dollars per hour so they come five hours per week, twenty five dollars, people is going to come happily to participate in the programs here." I remember that the first group, I entered, we met Tuesdays and Thursdays in the mornings to share and all that. She was giving a course...I remember that to me things didn't fit....As she was focusing on what happiness was for people...I felt strange about that type of philosophy" (Maria).

Philosophy: Participatory education

Casa Celeste favoured participatory education as the community development approach of their choice. Excerpts from the organization's publication The Pink Report (Casa Celeste, 1994b) are presented. The underlined ideas are some key concepts. Some of these concepts were identified also in the dialogue with one or more collaborators included key informants. A quote from Casa Celeste's publication illustrates the organization philosophy regarding the value of the educational approach, the principles they endorse within this approach, as well as their definition of social analysis. For example, the following quotes are illustrative:

> "We are immersed in deep social problems like poverty, violence, unemployment, vandalism. But, through education we must learn a new way of thinking, new way of living. We need to build new skills, new actions" (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 4).

> "This kind of educational approach works from the belief that the experts are those who live the issues and the learning needs to be based on their lived reality. Another starting point is the belief that everyone teaches and everyone learns. The individual is honoured for their knowledge and experience. The group works together to find solutions to community problems. To avoid the tendency to blame individuals, we analyze the causes and effects of being poor in a poor neighbourhood. People are capable. Each person is responsible for their own learning. We consistently began our educational sessions by asking the questions: What brings meaning to your life? Why are you here?" (Casa Celeste, 1994b, 1994, p. 37).

> "Social analysis is another aspect of participatory education. People learn that they are not alone, that problems are not only personal but systemic" (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 42).

Everyone teaches and everyone learns

Teaching and learning was mentioned by the majority of the collaborators in their dialogue and in connection with the method of learning perceived as guiding Collective Kitchens. Only the comments of Marita are presented in this section because she was the only collaborator who mentioned this sub theme in connection with Casa Celeste, beyond her Collective Kitchens' experience. She discussed

teaching and learning in connection with other activities of Casa Celeste as the following quote illustrates:

> "I taught and learned much crochet. There at Casa Celeste. I did blankets, baby's clothes. Yes, for the children and there I learned, because they taught me, and I also taught" (Marita 1, 1).

Solving the problems of the community

This concern was identified only through the dialogue with Marita who showed a strong concern about the issues of the geographical community where Casa Celeste, and her own home, is located. Maria, however, explained it as a concern of community development in the quote that follows:

> "Community development in general was working there to better the community. In the aspect of safety, because it was very unsafe here before. That was good, the police participated more, they also participated in teaching the people how to be more careful in the streets, careful about their children so that they are always supervised in the streets. People used to leave their doors open. What to do if someone calls you at night...All that was part of community development. At the same time Lynn and (name) used to teach very good classes on different topics to help the people. I invited Hispanic that came to listen without receiving any money...". (Maria).

Problems are not only personal but systemic

When the connection between personal and systemic problems is not made people may blame people. One collaborator, Magenta, questioned the existence of community or a work ethic in the area. She considered parents responsible for not sufficiently attending to the needs that she observed in some children from the area. Magenta said:

> "Nothing! To me is nothing! (there is no community in the area). Much sadness, much poverty, many bad habits. There is no...I hope parents realize what the future of those children is going to be and take some responsibility about their children".....They lose their shame completely. That affects me greatly in a moral sense...Because one is used to work!...Then to me is shameful to see that people just wait for the help of the government, that helps them and keeps them. And they lose so much the shame that they do not care about working! Then what is to be of that family who lives seeing that the father doesn't work or does nothing! Who lives from the state! Then they are going to continue like that. I think that is a bad example for a family" (Magenta 1, 4).

Being or not being a women's organization

Marita believed that Casa Celeste was a women's organization. However, despite Casa Celeste starting as a women's advocacy project it stopped being a women's project when it consolidated. Nevertheless, the majority of its members were women and Casa Celeste was perceived as a women organization, because of its beginnings connected to the women's advocacy project. This view persisted in the geographical community where Casa Celeste operated. The focus of Casa Celeste's work, however, was not women but the family. Marita's following comments are representative of the perception that is dominant in the geographical community:

> "Because I believe that if an organization is for women then it has to be for women. Isn't it? And I think that the coordinator is the person who should maintain the rules. Not the people who goes there"...."There was a time that the boyfriends or husbands of the women used to get there! Then what happened was that I didn't like it! Because the place is for ladies, for women only. Then when the men arrived I felt bad because then one couldn't talk anymore about what one could before. Even men were cooking at the Collective Kitchens." ..."Yes, all was for women. And nobody went there to sit and have coffee. There everybody went to work, to do something" (Marita 1, 1).

Challenges for Casa Celeste

Excerpts from Casa Celeste's publication, The Pink Report (Casa Celeste 1994b), can clarify some of the philosophical challenges faced by the organization. For example, a connection could exist between assumptions made by the organization about paying participants involved in some programs and difficulties experienced by the organization in overcoming apathy in the area. That is, participation may be encouraged only temporarily by payment while in the long run payment may decrease ownership and promote apathy.

First, two excerpts from Casa Celeste's publication related to the organization's views with respect to the issue of payment follow:

> "One key thing was to put priority on income, invest in choice and invest in the community. the concept was to put money into the hands of community advocates. We both felt really strongly that we wanted to pay as many people as possible -to get the money into the hands of the people in the community. Paying the people in the community and having the community be their own best community worker rather than an expert parachuting in and fooling ourselves that there is a quick fix to the social problems of crime, violence, poverty, unemployment, underemployment, lack of education, poor health, vandalism, etc." (The Pink Report, 1994, p. 7).

> "Some of the people in Casa Celeste are paid. It is not a lot of money, and usually it is a small amount that does not reduce the amount of benefits that people would receive from social assistance. Everyone who participates in the employment training is paid. Money is paid because that is one way to value people's input...People live in poverty and need money. It is hard to concentrate on other things when you are always worried about money. Many participants said that they started because of the money, but they stay for other reasons" (The Pink Report, 1994, p. 34).

Collaborators' views are presented in connection to the challenge of participation under the sub theme that follows:

Participation

Low participation was, or may be still is, an issue for Casa Celeste as Magenta, Marita and Maria noted. Magenta, for example, referred to this challenge in the following manner:

> "Well, there used to be many (participants) before! But after I left for my country (to visit) I returned and I was disappointed. No, not many people was participating. The coordinator changed when I left...I found another person. But, she, like I and other people...We have the purpose to continue..." (Magenta 1, 4).

Marita referred to the lack of participation as related to the limitations of Casa Celeste for providing meaningful help to the people in the geographical community where it was located. Personal feelings, related to differential treatment, were discussed by Marita. The following two quotes illustrate her views well:

> "For instance, if they send you to the voluntary work after that voluntary work they should send you to school, because you have the experience on the job. (But) they leave you there and they never accept you again. When they (people) have done that course or that voluntary work they never come again because they know that the organization (Casa Celeste) cannot give them anything else" (Marita 1, 1).

> "For instance, I used to go Tuesdays and Thursdays in the past, after I started to work I used to go for a full day: Thursday, but I did my day. Isn't it? Many went just to sign and left and then they would come for the 25 dollars (a week) on Tuesdays. Then, I used to think: I am here the entire day and they give me 25 dollars, this one comes only half a day and still receives 25 dollars. Isn't it? Then that began during the time of (name) the other girl. They are too young to be coordinators of a group of people who have already their own ideas and all! Isn't it? It has to be someone responsible, an adult (mature)" (Marita 1, 1).

Comments from Maria can further clarify the ideas that Marita previously discussed in regards to payment for participation. There are challenges and issues in connection to paying participants. For example, Maria said:

> "Yes, the money at Casa Celeste has two functions, good and not so good. Because to me is good in a sense because it helps. One hundred dollars a month help anybody. But to me the community needs of people who are ready to work in the community without the need to receive payment. They could come on voluntary basis to the meetings, to whatever happens in the community; that is, to transform it into something better. People have to participate, need to participate. Sadly if they were not paid five dollars per hour nobody wanted to participate. This is what happens lately, that people don't want to participate if they do not pay them because they got used to it" (Maria).

Maria discussed in detail her perception that participation should be encouraged without negatively affecting motivation. She provided some suggestions as to what was crucial in encouraging motivation in the following quote:

> "My vision was different, that the people would participate and learn to have a tool to survive later or to do something later, to develop their initiatives...To me that is the negative aspect of paying for participation, people lose motivation. If they come because they want to learn something, because they want to develop new activities, new learning...Even the people from Casa Celeste, the philosophy of the program was precisely that the people would develop the motivation needed to move away from welfare. One of the objectives was just that; that the people would move away from that continuous inactivity, that awful apathy. That is a routine; they are born with welfare and they die with welfare. The person is not dignified!" (Maria).

Concerns regarding paying participants are of particular importance because currently many non-profit organizations, such as Casa Celeste, are suffering from lack of adequate funding. During the beginnings of Casa Celeste, funding was not a challenge. Many community development initiatives start with government's funding although the expectation to become self sufficient is generally present, as

was the case for Casa Celeste. Self sufficiency may not be viable or may be extremely challenging increasing the relevance of funding issues.

Funding as a challenge

Funding became a challenge for Casa Celeste when government policies changed. Important changes in the funding environment made the situation more challenging for Casa Celeste. It was often difficult for the organization to meet many of the new funding criteria. Only Marita, however, noted funding as an issue for Casa Celeste and discussed the organization's difficulties in this respect as follows:

> "Casa Celeste doesn't have much funding. No, because it has always been as if it is not going to receive anymore and they do not have much money and all that. What is happening now is that people don't want to cooperate. People expect to receive but they do not want to cooperate. Isn't it? Then what happens at Casa Celeste is that it is like a vice. It transforms itself into a vice. Isn't it? If you give me that I am here. If you do not give me, I am not. Do you understand? There they should end that by now. They should learn who really needs. People who is really interested in Collective Kitchens" (Marita 1, 1).

The importance of the main coordinator

An important challenge for Casa Celeste, discussed by Marita and Magenta, was the departure of its main coordinator, who had been with the organization since its beginnings. Marita showed much loyalty to Lynn, the previous coordinator, and was generally critical of the coordinators who came after her. The importance of who is at the head of an organization became evident throughout our dialogue. The quote that follows illustrates Marita's views:

> "Lynn left and everything went down. Yes, I believe that if Lynn would return...If she would return everything will be fine. Everything will be fine. All this that is happening wouldn't continue to happen. Lynn doesn't remain sitting! When there is a problem she is like an ant; she needs to solve it and speaks with everybody...But these people, it is as if they do not know anybody, those who are there now, they cannot solve anything....Lynn has her personality and her way of being, isn't it? She is different...She doesn't make jokes or anything like it. She is very serious, serious and responsible, very responsible she is. And helps very much, very humane! She is a very good worker and very humane!...Since Lynn left it has been a big disorder. A disorder. Everyone brings their friends and...There was a time when men used

> to come. There was a time that the boyfriends or husbands of the women used to get there! (Marita 1, 1).

In summary, themes and sub themes discussed within this thematic area were relevant to Casa Celeste, the sponsor organization where the collaborators experienced their Collective Kitchens. Most collaborators were generally unfamiliar with the sponsor's philosophy and did not discuss it. Only collaborators who have been involved with the organization extensively, such as Marita, Magenta and Maria discussed issues related to it. Emergent themes and sub themes were often related to community development, participatory education and perceived challenges for Casa Celeste; that is, the need to encourage participation, to ensure funding and the need to adapt to a new coordinator.

Thematic area 4 - Community

Themes connected to the geographical area or community where Collective Kitchens were implemented are presented within this thematic area. In itself community emerged as relevant to the study from the dialogue with Magenta. Questions to clarify collaborators' views about community encouraged their further exploration of this thematic area. Different understandings of the meaning of community became obvious pointing to problematic aspects of the term community. A perception of the term as unproblematic may be misleading because it could encourage unreflective views and actions. Clarification of the meaning of community is relevant to develop community. For example, two meanings of community are present in Casa Celeste's (1994b) publication, The Pink Report, side by side; the paradox these two understandings of community represented was still not explored. A focus on community understood as the residential area and one which points the social challenges for the area is illustrated by the following quote :

> "We have unemployment, we have crime, we have family violence. We have abused children, beaten women, we have alcohol abuse and drugs. That is what we have. What we don't have is work, programs for people who

> abuse drugs and alcohol, we don't have programs against family violence, we don't have safety for our children" (The Pink Report, 1994, p. 21).

However, a more positive understanding of the residential area and one which highlights the importance of people is illustrated in the following quote from Casa Celeste's publication:

> "I see a community that from outside and from a statistical perspective is one that's ripe with all kinds of social ills that go along with people living in poverty...But behind those stats are a lot of really wonderful people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds that have skills and have strengths. To me the community is a wonderful place with lots of wonderful people" (The Pink Report, 1994, p. 21).

Meaning of community

The definition of community provided by collaborators included three main views of community: community as a geographical area or neighbourhood; community as a group of people with a common origin or the ethnic/cultural community; community as a concept that may be problematic, or community as a goal including the development of community by community members through increased participation.

Geographical community: Neighbourhood

Collaborators often referred to community as the geographical community and in terms of the physical areas surrounding their place of residence. For example, Marita referred to the need to go door to door to encourage participation from the people in the area. Adelaida and Dalila referred to their specific neighbourhoods and compared them with previous neighbourhoods in their countries of origin. All these perceptions of community were connected to a geographical understanding of community and they are noted in the following quotes:

> "Knowing people, door to door, explaining what Casa Celeste is. If you have any need...to go there. Sometimes I think that the people who are working as coordinators at Casa Celeste think that people is just going to go there to beg, to ask for things just because they want to ask. But, there are many people in need, many people here (area) who have need" (Marita 2.1).

"Oh, of course...There (my neighbourhood) where I lived I knew many people. For instance, everybody really. Ten blocks around my house everybody knew me and I knew everybody too. Because when I was taking my children to school I met other women. One starts friendships and you know: in our own language it is easier..." (Adelaida 2, 2).

"Yesterday I went for a walk and was looking at the neighbourhood. It looks quite healthy all this area, although they have told me that it is a bad area. But, all the people look very healthy because there is a sign that says: Neighbourhood watch, so they care of each other. You see? So, anything, and that is very good when...As the situation is, to be part of that is very good thing to do. To organize ourselves, so that among neighbours we look after each other. See? To take care, because we know each other here. Here I do not know many people but the gentleman across says: Hi! My neighbours of both sides know us; they know who lives here" (Adelaida 2, 2).

"Oh yeah! Well, for instance we...Here that (neighbourhood) is what I miss!" (Dalila 2, 5).

Community of origin

Often collaborators also referred to community in terms of their community of origin, or ethno-cultural community. For example, Adelaida referred to the crucial importance the community of origin had when she and her family arrived in Canada. Magenta referred to the existence of a community of origin that acted as a network where crucial information sharing among immigrants occurred. Marina referred to the help immigrants provided each other and to its value. Only Dalila, however, perceived the existence of an ethno-cultural community that was weak and generally unresponsive but still badly needed for her personal well being.

The quote that follows illustrates Adelaida's view about the existence of a valuable ethno-cultural community that extends over time providing support to its members. She said:

"Thank God a big group of people came that even up to today I have their friendship. People who asked me...Because I arrived very sick here...They took me to the drugstore, they showed me places that were close to home where I could buy many things...They all came to visit me...And really...we were here all sad, because we didn't know anybody out there, because only English-speaking people. So, to me,when these people (Latin Americans) arrived it was a happiness! Even for the children. It seems a silly thing but here is very important! " (Adelaida 2, 2).

> "A gentleman is proposing me to rent a place together, to do alterations and I could also make children clothing....He speaks Spanish too, not from my country, but he wants to help me. He has the intention of helping me, you see...When he came there were good jobs available here...but later he lost his job. So, he says: " I, my trade was not to be a shoemaker, I learned it here. I only knew how to shine my own shoes and look where I am." Well, he has some industrial machines and his own shop but he wants to rent a bigger one and there, he thought, sharing it with me so that I can start to work" (Adelaida 2, 2).

Magenta noted the existence of a network, which she called "cadena" (chain); this network facilitated the sharing of information among immigrants. She said:

> "It is something so obvious among immigrants that people from such city have come...They have arrived here in this city for the first time in years, searching...They come directly to Casa Celeste looking for Maria with names and telephone number and all. If you do not want to believe me ask...It is because this is a vicious cycle. I go for instance to such province and find someone unhappy and I tell the person: "Go to such city here is the phone number and name of so and so, she will help you." And those tell others, and the others tell still other, so it is a cadena (a chain)" (Magenta 2, 4).

Marina referred in positive terms to the help immigrants provide each other. For example, she described how financial help in cases of emergency was collected as follows:

> "Yes, when someone has a problem is where you see that everybody (Latin Americans) collaborates and help. Let's suppose that someone dies back home and she (the person living here) doesn't have money, the people, all the Latinos, get together and give some money, 20 or 40 dollars and they take it to her so that she could go to her country or so that she could help her family with it. This has been a real case" (Marina 2, 3).

Dalila was in the beginning concerned with the growing disappearance of values that favoured the development of her ethno-cultural community. However, an event, occurred after our first interview, favour a change in her views. The quote that follows illustrate her understanding of what she called the "Hispanic community":

> "Well, often we say that we are not (united) but there are cases that, yes. Did I tell you about the young man who killed himself? Recently, there I saw something that well...I felt very proud! Because it was obvious that people (Latin Americans) helped and gave support to the family of the teenager. The entire Hispanic community was there for support. Here I have witnessed the death of one or two Hispanics but I have never seen (support) as I have

> seen in this case. Well, even people who didn't know the family came to collaborate in...Well, this was something that even the father and the young man (the brother) were very thankful for. Sometimes, I think we lack the time to, to be able to get together." ..."So, the community gets together. I think that is something, to me is something very important! In my country there are people who also have to face being alone in their homes. Being in their homes, not working, because...So in this way they get used to that (idea) that the husband is everything!" (Dalila 2, 5).

Community building as problematic

The development of community was perceived by collaborators, however, as problematic. Marita, for instance, noted that developing community requires the help of an organization headed by someone who is aware of the needs of people living in the area. For example, the following quote from Marita illustrates the role that an organization can play in encouraging community development and about what can the community provide. It is noticeable that the support discussed by Marita is not material but it consists of sharing of ideas or alternatives and of general spiritual support, as illustrated in the following quote:

> "Community is working together. Solve the problems of all the people. Having someone (there at the organization) who knows well about the need. Because to be a coordinator and work in a community you have to experience that. Because if you have no experience, what are you going to think of the other people? You have not passed through that. You have no experience and then you do not know what they are suffering"..."But talking with other people helps you spiritually. Isn't it? Because you never solve somebody else's problems but you can still help someone to make it, in other ways. Because there are some people who have other, for instance, other initiatives. Isn't it? And you can make them be valued in a group of the community. It is for that, that there is a house there (Casa Celeste):of the community. I think it is to get people together' (Marita 2, 1).

Marina noted the need for developing a sense of community in Canada, where in her view it is badly needed because people like her often feel lonely or isolated. She said:

> "Here, here. That is here one feels lonely. One doesn't have family. One doesn't have nobody. One doesn't have...One goes to the community where people is and one feels different. One shares, learns. That is, these are very important things because one feels too lonely here. Alone, depressed, and the community helps you. One gets ahead with them" (Marina 2, 3).

It is often assumed that most immigrants from Third World countries have the support of their ethno-cultural communities. Adelaida, however, noted that in her case she received much support from other Latin Americans but none from the people from her own country of origin who she saw as being generally divided. She said:

> "You know that we (people from her country) do not get together very much. I do not know how we are? We do not seem to like to make friendship with people from our own country! It seems they like (better) the friendship of other people" (Adelaida 2, 2).

Magenta noted that it was challenging to develop community among people because people have different views and it is challenging to unite them. More than one quote from Magenta illustrate her concerns regarding the development of community as follows:

> "To me community is sharing one's happiness and the love one feels! Not the food, nor the money, nor the car!" ..."Yes, yes. There is need for community because to those who talk about community I would like to know to what they call community? What is that? What is it? Because look, over there (her country of origin) one is poor or rich however it may be, one is close to one's own people! One is close to one's children, close to the neighbour, close to those who need a hand!" (Magenta 1, 4).

> "I, the years have taught me. It is that my daughter have tried hard over there (her country); she has struggled but they have more or less organized it (a community). They are from a club, so and so club. It has not been easy for them to keep people united and that all agree...Because you know that if I tell you this is red, you tell me no, it is white. And a number of people follow the white and fewer follow the red. Yes, there is much division" (Magenta 2, 4).

Community: Caring, needy, enthusiastic people

Community as a topic was generally perceived as challenging. Throughout the dialogue and in relation to community three kinds of people were discussed. For example, caring people were needed for community development to succeed, as Marina and Marita noted. The following quotes from them illustrate the role of people who help and care about other people:

> "All this I am saying I am saying it because of my experience. For instance if people didn't have food my father had food and he gave it to people. If they didn't have a roof my father had a room that people could sleep in. If they didn't have clothes, my father gave them from our clothes. And this comes from over there and I have come here and I have observed almost the same things. That is, I have also helped and contributed because I have seen this with my father and all that. I learned! From what I learned from my father in (her country) I have seen it here, I have experienced and I have also helped people in whatever way...If someone is sick, I prepare a soup and take it to her/him. If I have to clean their home I clean it..." (Marina 2, 3).

> "Community, where did I learned (about it)? I think everywhere. In all the places I have been. Because helped, I have always helped. Isn't it? I do not like people to...If they ask for something and you cannot give them anything, well, what can you do? But, if you can help, not helping...Isn't it?" (Marita 2, 1).

Magenta believed, however, that need was crucial in the development of community. In her view people who had strong need affiliated with people to help each other. This is how she discussed the issue:

> "In the schools they always put us in groups. Isn't it? And we used to cook and Friday afternoon we sew. Saturdays we had gym. But I always saw that as a community. A group united to do something. But we were girls, we were in school"..."At the ranch, I do not know if this comes to the point. In my country we have "ejidos" (nobody's lands). Then they (the poor) go there and take possession of the land and not even the government can kick them out. That is like a community because they are very poor people awaiting that the government helps them to eat, to live. And the government never does. So they find a way to live...What you need to be united in a community: you need to have NEED...But why are you going to do it if the state gives you enough to eat" (Magenta 2, 4).

Finally, Adelaida noted that only enthusiastic people were truly needed to develop a sense of community. Enthusiastic people had the ability to motivate other people to participate and remain involved. As she said it in the following quote, they have "magic":

> "I learned about community through Casa Celeste, here at this neigbourhood, which is the only place I have visited...Only enthusiastic people who speak to each other (are needed to form community). Because there is some people who do not like to participate but when another person comes who tells them about the programs they have and all that...You see? We need enthusiastic people!" (Adelaida 2, 2).

Challenges: Resources and motivation

Collaborators discussed two main challenges to the development of community. The challenges discussed were: the limited resources available and the lack of motivation to participate within the community.

Limited resources

Limited resources affected people's opportunities to volunteer. For example, as the general situation becomes more challenging it is increasingly difficult for people to volunteer their time and efforts. This affects the work of organizations that have already limited financial resources. Marita, noted that the situation for people in the area was more challenging and this limited their participation. Casa Celeste, in her view, needed to do what was necessary in order to ensure that the people living in its area received the help they needed. She believed that Casa Celeste was not doing this properly. She said:

> "Right now that of volunteer work is finished. Now there is a great need for money. And, I think, we all have right to work. Isn't it? To being paid" (Marita 1, 1).

> "I think that it (community) is where all the development lies. Isn't it? Casa Celeste opened its doors to the community, to help those who were (or are) in need and if you have need for food they have to try hard to find food for you. Wherever it may be..." (Marita 2, 1).

Marina also noted that in the case of immigrants from Third World countries the amount of help they could provide to each other, although valuable, was still limited:

> "Our community (of origin) doesn't have many resources...That is, people work hard to have their things and what each of us can provide is not enough to support a family arriving. Giving them a bed or giving them something. If one provides someone with food for one day, well, it is enough. Because we cannot do it twice. That is, one is limited. Yes, one is limited in what one can help because one doesn't make enough money to support oneself. So, it is not much the help one can offer; but, still one collaborates in what one can do" (Marina 2,3).

Lack of motivation

Low or lack of motivation was identified by Magenta as a challenge for community development. In her view, people may just not have interest in becoming involved. She said:

> To me, in my view...a community is a unity, responsibility or commitment for the...for the things that occur. If you and me reach agreement about cooking well...to be there at the time accorded and bring the things and do it! But here it is...it is not easy! It is not easy also to phone people every week to remind them that we are going to do that. Then, what is community? Where is community? I also ask myself where is that community? It is only a name Nora! "..."There is not much interest, Nora. This is...What I see here is that there is no motivation..." (Magenta 2, 4).

Collective Kitchens: Can they build community?

Collaborators were asked whether Collective Kitchens could encourage the development of community. In the view of Casa Celeste's previous main coordinator, Collective Kitchens, perceived as a program, could not encourage the development of community. However, Johanne Talbot (1995) from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec believed that Collective Kitchens had a potential for community development. Excerpts from The Pink Report (Casa Celeste, 1994b) and from the dialogue with Johanne Talbot (1995) are presented as context to the views of collaborators. The excerpt that follows favours Collective Kitchens as the starting point to rebuild communities:

> "The relationship (aspect) is very important, and the link between different participants. A relationship that develops gradually, but surely. It is also something that, that is again part of the social fabric, but in large part of the country and the province we realized how the social fabric is disintegrating. The Collective Kitchen is a starting point to rebuild (this fabric) it..." (Talbot, 1995).

The view that building community is independent of any specific programatic effort is illustrated by the following excerpt:

> "I think that everybody comes to the community in a different way. To me building community just means bringing women out of isolation and giving the possibility for women to come together. We all come to understand in different ways, if just a couple of people feel some strength from each other

> by spending some time together and that eventually that might then mushroom into something bigger... But to me is not a specific program that builds community, it is again a place to be, it is having a community centre, it is having free child care and it is honouring above all the person that comes in just where they are at..."I am really glad that you felt comfortable enough to come and join us, because of coming back into the community and we do it in different ways" (The Pink Report, 1994, p. 43).

Yes, they can

Collaborators' answers to the role of Collective Kitchens in developing community were divided. The majority of them believed that Collective Kitchens were a beginning, or a place to start developing community because they contributed to overcoming isolation.

For example, Dalila, Adelaida and Marina favoured this view as illustrated in the following quotes:

> "Yes, I think that (Collective Kitchens) would help because it is a way so that one contacts the community. I think that it is a good path towards building community, so the community gets together. I think that is something, to me is something very important. Through Collective Kitchens we could get there. Yes, what happens is that sometimes one says: "There is not community." But, because one doesn't get out! Yes, one is inside the home. And then this is a form of forming community. This is a way" (Dalila 2, 5).

> "I liked it as it was (a mixed group and in English). But, well, I do not know about other women. But, because to me...I, if you could see that at times I feel sad here in Canada because when one is not able to speak English...I love to be with people. I love to have to speak with them (but) because of the little English I know, sometimes, that makes me feel frustrated. But there it was nice, because we all tried to understand each other. I think that it is very nice as it was because they learn to know you, and you learn to know them! And one tries to get along with people" ..."And since we are here in Canada we should try to get along with other people. Trying to get along then...And to contribute from our part, trying to understand other people. Because there is always that. One person has to begin from this side or from that side but always there must be a beginning! Well, if they need we have more than we need, then (laughs)..." (Adelaida 1, 2).

> "Yes, we were united (her Collective Kitchen group). We were always calling each other. Let's go to the meeting...Today we have the meeting of what we are going to plan, to cook. So, we were always in contact, the entire group" (Marina 2, 3).

No, they cannot

Marita, however, was strong in her view that Collective Kitchens did not develop community. She said:

> "The Collective Kitchen is for the community, but for the people who really need from the community. That is the role that Casa Celeste should play. Isn't it? To talk with people who don't have. Because there are many people who may have for bread but who may not have for milk, or things like that. Do you understand? No, there (at Collective Kitchens) each person cooked and then left. There was no (community), nothing happened after. That is Thursday you cooked and you wouldn't see anybody until the next Thursday, the people. That wasn't a community!" (Marita 2, 1).

Maybe, I do not know

Magenta was unsure; she had perceived low interest in participating in Collective Kitchens and to her high motivation was an important element in community development while she observed that motivation to participate in Collective Kitchens was, in her experience, generally low. She said:

> "I do not know. I am very undecided regarding that (whether there is community building in Collective Kitchens) because I do not see much interest. They tell you yes, but at the time of cooking they do not arrive and they do not even bother phoning you to tell you that they are unable to make it" (Magenta 2, 4).

In summary, within this thematic area themes related to the issues of community were presented. Those that were included were: the definition of community, challenges to community development and collaborators' perceptions of Collective Kitchens as encouraging community development or not.

Thematic area 5 - Socioeconomic and Cultural aspects.

This thematic area addressed macro level concerns discussed by collaborators. It included the provision of help, or social aspects, economic aspects, perceived effects on people as a result of changes in the social and/or economic aspects. Cultural aspects, particularly those connected to Collective Kitchens, are also presented.

The provision of help: The social

The provision of help was discussed by collaborators generally in terms of comparisons and references made with regards to their countries of origin. Quotes from Maria, Magenta and Marita are clear examples of this:

> "To me happiness is to see my country free of so much oppression by foreign countries; free of so much ugliness and hatred against the poor; free of so much need, (that) there are no social service, there is no help whatsoever. People over there dies of need. it is true! So, to me that would be happiness. That our countries could develop in a truly democratic environment, but democratic, legitimate. Power to the people is everything. That people have what they need" (Maria).

> "You must understand that in my country people have no help from the government, absolutely nothing...Here is from the parts where the government helps more! In the United States the government doesn't help that much. But here in Canada I have seen how much the government helps" (Magenta 1, 4).

> "Because we have passed more need (we are different), I think. I also know here what it is to have need...Here you know people but, I would feel ashamed to go and ask...You are not going to ask to a Canadian, no. They are not going to give you and...If they do not have either! They are going to tell you that they do not have. But in your country, your family, your aunt, all of them are there helping you. But here no. Here they close you the door. No...Yes, it is difficult. It is difficult. And because you do not have, you have to go to welfare. To beg. If they do not give you, where? " (Marita 1, 1).

The value of help from the state that ensure people's well being was noted by some collaborators. The most clear example comes from Adelaida. She referred to the help she received from the state (Manpower) when she and her family arrived in Canada as follows:

> "We went to Manpower (then) and they provided for everything. They had us there for almost a month until we could rent a house. Because my children were small they found us a government subsidized home. They gave us help. But to me the most important part was that the people came to visit and help..." (Adelaida 2, 2).

Changes in the provision of help from the state were noted by Marina and Dalila. and Adelaida in the following quote:

> "No, there is not much (help for immigrants). There is a need for more help. There is a need for more...more orientation. More orientation to be able

to...that people feel that they are not alone, that there is help from the people from here!" (Marina 2, 3).

"When I first came I was very sad and all but I heard about the many programs at Casa Celeste. And there were other programs downtown. I do not remember each one by one but there were many programs. They used to give people classes so they would learn...Many training programs but now it has diminished. I think that help has changed. It has changed a lot! (Dalila 2, 5).

"I do not think there is enough (help) now...Because when one arrives, coming and not knowing anybody is very sad. Someone coming and taking you places where you can meet other people...Because one starts here again, a new life" (Adelaida 2, 2).

Concerns with abuse

Concerns with abuse were noted by some collaborators. For example, Magenta was concerned with immigrants abusing the help provided by the state. She was also concerned with immigrants' expectation that help from the state would be available to them indefinitely. She discussed her understanding of what abuse was in the context of her own personal experience; not being helped when in need and still managing. Her concerns are presented within the next sub theme: immigrants taking advantage of the system.

Immigrants taking advantage of the system

The following quote illustrate Magenta's concerns with immigrants' expectations of help as well as her perception that were taking advantage of the state:

"Jobs being available and (people) being able to work...How is it possible that they ask for help all their lives! I spend a lot of money in my medicines! There are pills that cost me a dollar nineteen each. But they go to the doctor with great ease and ask...They take them for a couple of days and they leave them there. When they need later they go again. Because the medicines cost them nothing"..."God help us! Please open your eyes to the world! There is an old lady whose husband left to (name of country) and she has a daughter, a little challenged. Isn't it? Someone asked her: Has your husband been able to return? She answered: No, because his time has passed. But I still send him his little cheque (chequecito). What do you make of that? An old lady...As if he was here! Is that correct?" (Magenta 2, 4).

Magenta's perceptions were connected to her experiences. For example, she never received help, despite suffering need, and still she managed. In the quote that follows Magenta explored the issue as follows:

> "I never received a dime from the state. It was available...Because they cut a cheque of mine (at work) and I went to ask for help with my rent (to Welfare) while my cheque arrived. I would have returned them the money but they denied the help to me! (Why?) Because I was not in need! (in the eyes of those who provide help). I have never received (help) because I will be ashamed of going there to ask...No I had no idea about Welfare. Because I have always been against these things....and my father was always against it. Isn't it? Maybe I got a lot from my father and because of that....(Magenta 2, 4).

Immigrants being taken advantage of by others

Marita, however, was concerned with immigrants being hurt or at risk by the challenging situation in Canada. Marita, similar to Magenta, discussed her understanding of abuse in the context of her personal experiences. She said:

> "Now (in her second job) the man is not very straight, those who manage janitorial contracts are like that. I am working there and I had to stay until eleven and he has not paid me extra time. So, I am thinking about leaving that second job because I am not going to work for free. You can't afford that. I told him that if he didn't pay me the hours i wasn't going to work for him anymore because he owes me, and I have half an hour coming here to my other job. I have to go to my other job...People abuses you because they know there is not much work and they abuse you. This is why people doesn't want to work because if they do not pay you what they owe you, you better quit. There is abuse" (Marita 2, 1).

Marina and Dalila, were also concerned with the vulnerability of immigrants. For example, Dalila said:

> "Now it is more difficult to find a job, more difficult. Well, there are many opportunities to take advantage of immigrants (to abuse them). Let's say they pay you little and you have no benefits at all; they do not even pay for your pension. That is more common here now" (Dalila 2, 5).

The government failing to help appropriately

Maria discussed how the attitude of the government, in failing to integrate immigrants to the working force, is affecting immigrants. She stated:

> "I see awfully bad the attitude of the government when it brings people from our countries. Wonderful that the government helps the people when they

> just arrive, because they need that help. Help them in their education, so that they learn the language and learn how this society works. However, after a little while they should be introduced in the work force, so the people get used to their new environment. I have noticed that people after a while become "terrorized," the people from my country are terrorized of confronting English-speaking people when looking for a job. How am I going to work? (they ask themselves). I criticize the policy of the government that doesn't help the people to work right away, and to facilitate to them both study and work. They wouldn't be afraid of working; I see people who is really scared of working. They prefer to go back because they become scare of looking for a job" (Maria).

Her understanding was also discussed in terms of her personal experience in the United States. She explained how circumstances that almost forced her and her family to work in the United States have been very painful but also had some positive aspects. She said:

> "In the United States my daughter could not support all of us. We came with tourists visas, we were illegal. We came with two young sons. My soul hurt to see them working. You know in our countries one supports one's children until they finish university. So, I was used (to be) like that...they gave me work in a hospital washing dishes. My husband at a factory, there he found a job and there he stayed. The four of us, so we could find a place for ourselves and have our own home. We were illegal and we were working illegally, we were not afraid, we were not afraid even of immigration. I criticize the policy of the government not to help the people to work right away, and to facilitate to them both study and work. They wouldn't be afraid of working; I see people who is really scared of working. They prefer to go back because they become scare of looking for a job" (Maria).

The economy: Food/cost of living and work

Most collaborators noted that food and the cost of living were higher and they felt affected by this. They also discussed difficulties related to finding employment as well as challenges faced in relation to work, such as regarding prevalent conditions at the work place and/or regarding difficulties in ensuring full-time employment. An excerpt from Casa Celeste's (1994b) publication is included because it illustrates the social problems common in the geographical area where Casa Celeste is located. For example, the excerpt follows:

> "Poverty produces all kinds of social diseases: crime, alcoholism, family violence, social violence...These are the problems that affect the poor people who live in our community. But not only are these things a problem in

> our community, they are a general problem that affect all of society" (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 23).

Food/cost of living

Marita discussed the cost of food as an issue for the geographical community where she lives as follows:

> "Food is a need for this community...The people themselves can make their own food....For instance, if you go door to door you can ask how much, that is the need you can tell right away because of the children and all that. Then you can do a "olla comun" (common pot) and the people themselves, who are in need, can be cooking. People themselves, if you provide all the elements, would be able to do it. And that would benefit the government too. To find a way to solve so much need" (Marita 2, 1).

Marina discussed how food became expensive and less accessible. While Magenta pointed that it was also challenging for the elderly. Dalila was concerned with the ratio between cost of living and salaries. Their views are presented in the following quotes:

> "It has changed a lot since I came. The food used to be very cheap, things were easily found and all was very access(ible)...all was easier to find: a job. All was less expensive. But today it is very difficult. The situation is very difficult right now" (Marina 2, 3).

> "What they give me for my pension is not much and the rent, they have raised it. The medicines are expensive...The cost of living has risen, yes. Because the (price of) food has risen a lot" (Magenta 2, 4).

> "Because as everything is more expensive and the salaries are the same...Then, people has to, how do you say it? People had to tighten their money, "apretar su dinero" as we say" (Dalila 2, 5).

Work: Difficulties finding employment and working conditions

Marita explained how she had two part time jobs and the difficulties she faced in finding that second job as follows:

> "I found my other (second) job through a friend. That is how I found it or I wouldn't have found it. I was behind that job for four months, after that job. Until the person who had been saying for a long time the he was going, was truly going. He always said that he would go, but he remained there. But then, he left and for two months I am working there" (Marita 2, 1).

Marina explored the challenges that generally immigrants face in finding employment in the following quotes:.

"Before it was easier. One was able to find work more easily because there was more work here. There was more...that is, everybody needed (you). You could have two or three jobs. Now you cannot do that. Now the situation is more difficult...Now if one goes to apply for a job they ask you to fill an application, and they have big piles of them like that (sign). But at the working places they do not even look the application forms: they look for references. For instance, they tell me: Do you know someone who works well? Phone that person and bring him/her! But applications are not even considered. So, it is difficult to find a job" (Marina 2, 3).

"Imagine!...Newcomers do not have experience! I know young women who are in cleaning jobs, that is what you can find more. And one of them says: I have to search for this because this is the only option I have, I can't, that is, I have studied but I cannot say I will be working at an office because they will not give me a job without references. And that is very important here; they expect you to have work experience. And if one doesn't have experience, one doesn't get a job" (Marina 2, 3).

Dalila was also concerned with employment opportunities, as the following quote shows:

"Yes it is harder for immigrants to find a job. I think that at the time I came (to this province), I think it was easier to find a job than now. Now it is more difficult to find a job, more difficult. Well, there are many opportunities to take advantage of immigrants (to abuse them). Let's say they pay you little and you have no benefits at all; they do not even pay for your pension. That is more common here now" (Dalila 2, 5).

Adelaida described current changes, such as the reduction of the public sector, as follows:

"Many changes, well many changes to make you feel worse. Because all this is against us. All this that the government has made so many cuts (public sector) and there are so many people out of work. Well, if one if one...What hope do I have of finding a job if this is everyday worse! And the salaries have dropped too"..."Many people without work! Some had their money saved and the government is waiting for them to finish it. Because many people who had a stable job had their cents saved...Now unemployment lasts only nine months, no longer a year as before. After nine months you have to see what you do if you still didn't find a job. You start to eat your small savings. I think that the government wants that the people end with their little savings" (Adelaida 2, 2).

Marita was concerned with working conditions. She described some of the issues she encountered in her part time employment in the following quote:

"Often we do not have even garbage bags in the job. We have to put medium size garbage bags in the small garbage pails. That adds to our work

> because if the bag is clean then you try to avoid changing it, like when there are papers only. But if the bags are dirty you have to put the huge bags there in small pails. I told him last time that if he didn't try to provide the things needed...And the vacuum, there are six floors and we have only two vacuums...Then I told him that it was too much, that we needed two extra vacuums if he wanted a job well done. Now for a job well done you have to have liquids to clean the furniture. I have to clean them with the same cloth that I clean the washrooms. I have to clean the furniture, the desks. That is not right. This country is facing a lot of need, in everything a big need" (Marita 2, 1).

An important challenge, discussed by Marina, was the difficulties in finding full time employment. She mentioned this as follows:

> "That is I am working already seven months at this place, part time. I have talked with them so they put me full time but they have not given it to me. So the government wants to push people to work and the way they do it is (by) shrinking the help that they give you...It doesn't depend from me because I have talked at the workplace, I have said: "Look, I have three children and I need to work full time." But they cannot give it to me right now. So what happens is that they (social services) are pressuring me so that I work longer time. But if I can't" (Marina 2, 3).

Often collaborators discussed openly their income, as the following quote illustrates:

> "Right now they rolled back. I worked, and imagine until last year I worked and they would give me the difference but now that help has shrunk. That is if I make two hundred and fifty six dollars every two weeks they used to complete...that is I make five hundred and something, what I needed. Now, no. Now they have lowered the rate. They have lowered it because they want people to work. They want to have people working more but if one doesn't find" (Marina 2, 3).

Effects on people

In connection with the socioeconomic situation that Canada faces, collaborators discussed a few consequences of this situation on people.

Denying the situation

For example, Marita noted that often people either failed to see the challenging situation or denied it in the following quote:

> "People right now is blind. Isn't it? If they see it what are they going to do? Where are they going to get more from? That is why there are so many crimes, robberies...The need is visible but some people don't want to see it. And if they are facing it (in their personal lives) what are they to do? What are they going to do?" (Marita 2, 1).

Increasing need for cooperation at home

Furthermore, the challenges related to the current situation required, in her view, greater cooperation from family members sharing the home. This could be challenging as noted by Marita in the following quote:

> "My son helps me. We all help each other and we live together. We have survived and we do not have needs. But right now the young do not want to work either. My daughter used to tell me: If you work why do I have to work? She is eighteen. But she also has her needs and I am not going to live for ever...she also has to think about her need, because they like to wear eighty dollars pants, then they have to buy them themselves....Because one has to pay the rent, the food, and with one thousand dollars you do not have enough to live with three adults. Alone I can't support the house" (Marita 2, 1).

Blaming each other

Dalila, noted that there were contradictions on the government implementation of policies that she could not understand. Her quotes illustrate, however, a tendency for people to blame each other under difficult socioeconomic conditions:

> "Well, for instance the case of single men, men who have no commitment of any kind. I know of men who are, two, three, four, five years receiving help and they are never required to go to work. However, sometimes they ask single mothers to go to work, They are requiring it. That is what I cannot explain myself...Yeah there is no logic. Yes, because I know the case of a single mom. They gave her six months to find a job. However, a 35 year old man, single and without children and until now, as far as I know, he is still receiving help. So, a man with his five good senses, as we say! That is what I...those contradictions. I do not know why, see? In this respect they should study better each case" (Dalila 2, 5).

Increasing delinquency

Finally, Adelaida, noted that the situation was bound to increase delinquency levels in Canada as people who could not obtain resources in a legitimate manner could resort to obtain them illegitimately. She said:

> "The government must have its plans because so much unemployment! Look, maybe not us but to other people this is very distressing. Canadians may end up crazy!...Because is people who...Young girls who are selling their bodies. These people get desperate because they have cut so much and I do not believe they cut only us. Those cuts are for everybody! And then these people with their vices, those cigarettes so expensive, the alcohol, it is not

> enough! And so young girls throw themselves to the streets to sell themselves. The young boys go to the store to rob them. That is what the government is creating with the cuts they are making. And this is going to be worse that the United States if the government continues cutting people, closing so many sources of employment...Here what is going to happen is that a lot of delinquency is going to flourish. Or already flourished because there have already been some few ugly cases" (Adelaida 2, 2).

Cultural aspects

The main cultural aspect, related to Collective Kitchens, was food. In connection with food a few issues were discussed. However, collaborators contributed their views, at one or another time of their dialogue, towards increasing general understanding of the challenges Collective Kitchens of mixed cultural background could encounter.

The issue of food

Marita perceived a connection between food and language; while, in her view the food that Latin Americans made was more nutritious. She said:

> "Well the kinds of food. Foods in Spanish (made by Spanish-speaking people) compared with food in English (made by English-speaking people)...The food from Spanish is more nutritive because, I remember, that we always, how can I say it? When one just arrives in this country one always eat hamburger. Isn't it? And there (at Collective Kitchens) we made hamburger! When (even though) the food in the Kitchens should be nutritive"..."Yes, one day I remember I made "empanadas". But, if everybody like them! When the dough was ready everybody wanted to help and all that but everybody wanted to take home more than their share. Isn't it? And for a Collective Kitchen, making empanadas is not very useful because each empanada is small. it is one per person, Then it is too expensive and a lot of work" (Marita 1, 1).

Magenta noted that canned and/or frozen food was a challenge for Latin Americans normally not used to either one. She said:

> "Because not everybody, like the Latinos do not like much...Well, canned food or frozen food. In this country people is used to freeze everything. Isn't it? And we in our countries are not. But it is easy to cook for instance for four or six people and tonight you dine and the rest you freeze for tomorrow, and day after tomorrow. So in this way it can be done, and has given good results. Not to make so much" (Magenta 1, 4).

Salt preferences were discussed by Magenta as particularly problematic as illustrated in the following quote:

> "We, coming from high altitude countries, then we use a lot of salt, isn't it? We love seasonings. Until today I have not had bad experiences, people who decide not to try my food. We are very good using spices and salt. They have to understand that we come from high altitude countries and we need the salt. Isn't it? Here the altitude is low. Here they do not use either salt nor sugar" (Magenta 1, 4).

Dalila noted that Canadian women working in English-speaking Collective Kitchens measured everything and always followed recipes quite closely; Latin Americans, however, generally do not, except when new recipes are tried. She said:

> "More than anything their food has no taste! Very little taste. I think they do not give it much taste. See? I do not know if it is they type of food they had made, I do not know. See? I think they do not use spices, no. Well, normally we do not measure everything, we do not measure in detail everything. We put the salt or spices, more or less. They used everything with their measure and maybe because of that...they do not try it (taste it). They just put the amount the recipe tells, because when I was with this group we made everything but used measure and sometimes, well, at home I had to add. We are used to try (taste) while we are cooking and they do not do that. They go and add the amount it says there and mix and all that.." (Dalila 1, 5).

Latin Americans' preference for garlic, onions and strong spices was discussed by Marina as follows:

> "Well, we were in a group with Canadians but the food they prepare is very different from ours. So we formed a group of, of Spanish...The Canadian women saw that, because they always said when the Latina cooked the smell and the taste was! (good)...Because the seasoning and the taste were different..Yes, because it was so good, good taste and seasoning!...I do not know but we have something that...they do not use seasoning, they do not use them. That is we use onions, garlic, we used many vegetables that is. But, we do not used them as they do. They make soups that, soups that look like stew. But they throw the carrots this big. That is they chop things in a manner completely different from our manner...(We chop) like with curiosity! Like with detail. That is everything well chopped, well...That is if we are to make a soup the onion is finely chopped, the, the everything is well chopped" (Marina 1, 3).

Dalila also mentioned a preference for rice rather than salads illustrated, among other perceived differences, in the quote that follows:

> "Yes, we were always the same group. Because at Casa Celeste there was a group of Latinos, besides a group of Canadians...Our group, the group of Latinas, we were different from the Canadians...And it is that our customs are very different from their customs. In many respects they are different. I do not know, but we...the way we cook is different from the way they cook, isn't it? ...They cook very different from the way we cook! Latinos, yes. I, they have

> different manner of cooking. Well, for instance there are...Well, sometimes it could be the spices, maybe because one doesn't know the names the spices have in English. But they do things differently. They cook the food, sometimes they used too much sugar in the food...Latinos, I think, are used to eat rice with almost everything. Isn't it? They (Canadians) do not eat much rice. It seems that rice is not for them so important. And salad, I think, it is very important to them. Yes, salad is what they....Well, I do not like very much their food there are certain things they have that I do like but..."(Dalila 1, 5).

Adelaida noted, however, than in preparing food in groups that were culturally mixed the crucial element was flexibility. She implied, however, that men, described by her as "some people", were not sufficiently flexible which made it very challenging for Latin American women. She said:

> "But in truth, there is people (men?) who don't eat anything from others, from other countries, from other people. They only eat exactly the food...If their mother didn't prepare it, or if the wife doesn't do it, they do not eat it" (Adelaida 1, 2).

Food preferences and language: The cultural connection

Food preferences are connected to language spoken because language becomes a cue of culture and cultural preferences. This connection, however, has often been forgotten by collaborators. Dalila assumed that ability to communicate fluently in English was the main requirement for participating in culturally mixed Collective Kitchens. For example, she said:

> "Well, especially to me it is not very important because I can understand English. But, yes, for instance in our group we had one or two people who didn't speak much English. So, I think, that to them it may be very difficult. See? To me, particularly, no. No, I didn't have any problem. But I think that there were two or three people that may have had problems. Then for them it had been very difficult to...in a group if they do not understand" (Dalila 1, 5).

However, if the participant's family members refuse to accept the food prepared in Collective Kitchens the participant may consider to stop participating in the groups.

Marita, expressed difficulty in referring to Latin American food other than "food in Spanish". She revealed a connection between food and language as follows:

> "Well the kinds of food. Foods in Spanish (made by Spanish-speaking people) compared with food in English (made by English-speaking people)...The food from Spanish is more nutritive because, I remember, that we always, how can I say it? When one just arrives in this country one always eat hamburger. Isn't it? And there (at Collective Kitchens) we made hamburger! When (even though) the food in the Kitchens should be nutritive" (Marita 1, 1).

Marina and Magenta, however, were very clear about the value of preparing food with women from a similar cultural background. They described this as follows:

> "Sometimes it doesn't work. People who comes to cook quit coming. And I have asked them personally: What is the problem? Why they have not returned? It is not so much the financial part but people in many countries are not used to eat food that is typical here. Then, there has been people who have cooked for six children and themselves and they have had to throw the food away because the children, the family, have not wanted to eat it for the simple reason that they are not used to the food" (Magenta 1, 4).

> "Of course it was (important to speak Spanish)! Because, yes, it is important because Canadians made their food and their...they have their own ingredients. And they are used to make food that we probably do not like! Then, we have our own things, our own, that is the seasonings, the vegetables, the vegetables we use in a different way from the way they use them" (Marina 1, 3).

The advantages and disadvantages of mixed Collective Kitchens

Maria noted advantages and disadvantages in encouraging Latin American women to participate in culturally mixed Collective Kitchen groups where only English was spoken. She referred to them in the following manner:

> "Now, we had other problems, Hispanic women did not feel well with the food that people eats here. So, when I started to phone I discovered this. Then, I suggested that maybe we should organize a kitchen of only Hispanic women. In certain measure it was not that convenient because we would be only Hispanic women, without practicing English, in our language, only with our type of foods, and it was good that they would also learned to cook the type of food that people eat here. But, they became very enthusiastic about it and this is how the Hispanic group of cooking started. The Hispanic group, only Hispanic, to cook only Hispanic food. Everybody happy took their food home. They used to make Chilean empanadas, Bolivian empanadas and Colombian empanadas, arepas, a dish of beans with meat that is from the Caribbean and so on. Salvadoran dishes, Nicaraguan dishes, because there were people of different nationalities coming to Casa Celeste. Mexican dishes. Then we were learning to eat Hispanic food from other places and to make it too. Which was very good" (Maria).

In summary, within this thematic area themes related to both socioeconomic and cultural aspects emerged. One salient theme was the provision of help and changes related to it; while collaborators' concerns with abuse were also noted. Sub-themes such as concerns with immigrants taking advantage and with immigrants being taken advantage of were discussed in detail by two collaborators. Maria was concerned with the role of government. Concerns related to the state of the economy in Canada were noted; in particular, concerns about the cost of food, the cost of living and considerations related to work. Furthermore, the potential that the economy could have on people were also discussed. Finally, cultural aspects in relation to food were discussed by collaborators. The cultural aspects discussed within this thematic area could have been included within the first thematic area as well because of the connection to the immigrant status of collaborators. However, they are reported here because they are perceived as transcending the personal

Overall, the findings from the first data analysis illuminated the complexity of issues that need to be considered when documenting the experiences of people from an ecological perspective. Issues related to personal experiences need to be considered. For example participants in this study had as immigrant women emerged as related to their experiences within Collective Kitchens. Issues such as language common to their female status or their culture became relevant. Also issues related to specific concerns about their experiences in Collective Kitchens needed to be considered. For example, their definition of that experience, what encouraged them to participate, the importance of enjoying the experience, the learning and the challenges; as well as, their expectations and views of Collective Kitchens require consideration. Furthermore, issues related to Collective Kitchen's philosophy and operation need to be taken into account. Lastly, issues related to social and economic views and their effects on people as well as cultural aspects that influence Collective Kitchens became important.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The first level of analysis led me to a second level of analysis. Reflecting on the findings from the first level analysis, I was reminded of the formats of Collective Kitchens. Discussion of these formats can increase our understanding of Collective Kitchens by making explicit the underlying implicit assumptions from those who created, and/or implemented Collective Kitchens. For example, there may be an excessive focus on technical knowing, or on activities and skills. The "Kitchen" format best depicted an excessively technical focus. It emerged from the dialogue with collaborators and from the document analysis of the Collective Kitchens Handbook, which revealed that Collective Kitchens were almost entirely dedicated to technical aspects in the document. (See Appendix E for more details) (EBH, 1992).

> "The Collective Kitchens Handbook is a practical guide to setting up and operating a collective kitchen. It presents the knowledge and experience of the nutritionist, participants, coordinators and sponsors of the Collective Kitchen Project in Edmonton" (EBH, 1992).

In this section, a description of the process by which the formats emerged is followed by a more specific discussion of each format. Following, the three paradigms of knowledge or ways of knowing, as they apply to Collective Kitchens are discussed. Finally, issues that emerged in relation to Collective Kitchens and from the application of the ecological framework are also discussed.

Describing the process: Emerging formats

The Handbook has two major components. The first component addressed technical concerns and described Collective Kitchens as a task oriented program. Almost ninety per cent of the content corresponded to this part. The second component addressed issues of concern to sponsors and coordinators of Collective Kitchens. It described roles, responsibilities and provided guidance regarding minimal expectations. It covered, as mentioned, no more than ten per cent of the total

content, of which almost seventy five per cent addressed the sponsor's role and responsibilities. (See Appendix E for details).

Despite the dominant technical focus of the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992), the importance of non-technical aspects emerged from the dialogue with collaborators. The value of group activities and the importance of the quality of relationships among participants in Collective Kitchens was well documented by collaborators and by key informants. For example, being with people was crucial for Adelaida who noted the need for opportunities for this to happen, in the following quote:

> "It is a group that it is trying to learn to cook but at the same time...Where we go to know other people...Where we have the opportunity to know each other. Not only cooking but knowing other people!" (Adelaida 1, 2).

The importance of quality relationships within Collective Kitchens was discussed by collaborators and confirmed by Johanne Talbot (1995), from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec, who mentioned that Coalition organizers and members had realized this. That the development of meaningful relationships had been neglected, became obvious only after the Coalition was able to collect and analyze information from many Collective Kitchens' coordinators and participants. As a solution to this challenge, the Coalition initiated educational sessions for the development of "affective" leaders who are different from "practical" leaders. As defined by Talbot (1995), the affective leaders' goal was to teach participants, through discussion, reflection or modeling, about meaningful relationships. She referred to the discovery of this challenge and the Coalition's attempt to find solutions in the following manner:

> "I was telling you about what was going wrong in the beginnings of the Collective Kitchens and it was because everything was on the practical things to do. We were learning from the participants how to make a list to buy groceries, everything practical but we had little sense of how relationships worked. So, it is really from the experience of different leaders in Collective Kitchens that one day we had the possibility of taking a lot of experience back together and then seen what was common to a lot of

> Collective Kitchens...we have been able to make this "training gangs" on how to deal with relationships among participants in Collective Kitchens" (Talbot, 1995).

Despite the value of meaningful relationships within Collective Kitchens little attention still seems to be paid to teaching facilitation competencies. Outside of the efforts made by the Coalition of Quebec, coordinators have not been trained to ensure that they are effective facilitators. Furthermore, as they have mainly been volunteers, selection may have been limited. The Collective Kitchens Handbook, the best known resource for the implementation of Collective Kitchens, refers only briefly to the value of creating a friendly atmosphere (EBH, 1992). It provides, however, little or no information about methods, resources or options as illustrated in the following quote.

> "The most important work of the coordinator is to facilitate the group. The coordinator must create a friendly, safe, non-judgmental atmosphere and involve the participants in the discussions and decisions that are made in the kitchen. The approach is "learner-centred" which is very different from what most of us experienced at school. A learner-centred approach recognizes that people have knowledge, skills and resources to share with one another" (EBH, 1992, p. 38).

As noted earlier, the document analysis showed that a dominant technical focus existed in the publication. For example, the topic with the greatest proportion of pages within the Collective Kitchens Handbook was planning included more than the selection of recipes or meals that will be made by the group. Other parts of planning included transforming selected recipes to fit cost and nutritional concerns, as well as ensuring that sufficient food for the number of people participating is available. Planning also included writing the shopping list for the group session and estimating expenses. Both aspects are related to budgeting.

The planning session is estimated to last two hours. The concern with planning reflected in the Collective Kitchens Handbook was mirrored by the perceptions of collaborators. To them, appropriate planning ensured well functioning Collective Kitchens. However, planning sessions were described by collaborators as generally

challenging. Planning encouraged collaborators to ensure low cost food preparation. For example, through the following quote from Dalila's discussion, it was evident that planning was both time consuming and focused on budgeting.

> "Well, sometimes we passed almost two hours there planning...We used to go to buy and...we looked for the most comfortable (price). Always looking for what was most comfortable (or less expensive price). Isn't it?...So, in this way we used to take all the receipts, everything so they will see them."..."Yes, because of the budget. Yes, because of what Maria used to say, that we had to (manage) within what they gave us (allocated money or budget)."..."...within what they gave us we had to find the way of not going beyond...So, we were always looking, searching; we used to take the recipe book, the ideas..." (Dalila 1, 5).

Budgeting or planning for low cost food preparation, is described by the Collective Kitchens Handbook as a crucial component of the planning session (EBH, 1992). While it may be difficult to plan within the allocated budget, not exceeding the budget is a priority for Collective Kitchens, illustrated in the following quote:

> "Participants prepare a grocery list and estimate costs of each item using flyers...If the choices exceed the budget the group works together to alter recipes or make substitutions for higher priced items...Everyone has the opportunity to learn how to shop from a list, and to make decisions at the store necessary to stay within budget" (EBH, 1992, p. 36).

The focus on preparing food within the budget, however, may be excessive. For example, Marita felt that the amount of help provided by Collective Kitchens was insufficient at times. Collective Kitchens, understood by her as a form of financial help for low income participants, provided limited relief. Marita also noted that many low income potential participants did not participate in Collective Kitchens because the amount of money required to participate was often prohibitive to them. Rather than participate in Collective Kitchens, where they have to pay at least half the expenses, many women in need would prefer to receive help from food banks. She states:

> "The people go once (to Collective Kitchens) but they do not go again! When they see there is money (required to participate) they do not go anymore. Money, because if you have to pay two dollars, many people do not have them...: "I was chatting last week with a lady who told me that they (the government) give her too little, they give her six hundred dollars, for

> herself and her two children...She pays five hundred and twenty five on rent here. Then,...she goes to the food bank and the rest of the money she leaves to buy food, what the food bank can't give her..." (Marita 2, 1).

Literature from *Comedores Populares* also mentioned concerns about the participation of the most vulnerable women in mutual aid projects. Lafosse, a researcher who is cited by Campfens (1989), discovered that the greater the economic need of women the less possible it was for them to participate in collective mutual aid models, such as *Comedores Populares* of Peru. They were generally unable to pay for their share; therefore, they become increasingly dependent on agencies.

Most importantly, the quality of relationships among participants within Collective Kitchens may be affected by excessive concerns with budgeting. It is challenging to balance the emphasis on nutritive, tasteful and low cost food preparation. The development of meaningful relationships among group members may not be favoured by the stress generated by technical and/or financial concerns. When the focus of Collective Kitchens is on the provision of non-expensive food, and quality relationships is not attended, participants' enjoyment suffers. Emphasis on budgeting, or a focus on "cooking to economize," may contribute to poor quality relationships and low enjoyment. Marita noted that when the level of need for food increased, the level of competition for food also increased encouraging poor quality relationships within Collective Kitchen groups. She said:

> "...Different women from different countries all coming with our culture. Isn't it? Many became upset, some...everything seemed bad to them...Well, they show their...They all wanted to know! They all knew and at the same time they didn't know anything! Isn't it?...."Sometimes they told me you are three or sometimes they told me you are four (mouths to feed). But, I would be silent. To me the need wasn't that big (still she was upset by the memory). But to other people, yes! Isn't it? And those people who had strong need wanted more. Well, I was happy with whatever they gave me, because there were only ten dollars that I put, it wasn't much. But, how can I say it, to people with strong need, who didn't have, it was, it was good. They wanted more. Isn't it?...(Marita 1, 1).

Most collaborators, however, said that they enjoyed the experience of participating in Collective Kitchens. Furthermore, enjoyment was for them valuable in itself, as noted below:

> "And the ladies were very kind too. And I tried to be kind also...(Adelaida 1, 2) OR "They go to Collective Kitchens for the same reasons I go: for the company, for the community, for the communication..." (Magenta 1, 4) OR "Because our group, the group of Latinas, we were very different from the Canadians. I had a very good time!" (Dalila 1, 5).

Among Latin American women, food may not be perceived simply as a resource; it may be also interpreted as a source of personal and cultural pride. Within the Collective Kitchens Handbook, food has been described as the tangible result of the women's work, or the product of their efforts (EBH, 1992). Furthermore, collaborators referred to food in connection with their identity. Some of them expressed pride in the compliments they received because of their food's taste and/or quality. Magenta, a collaborator, was concerned about people rejecting her food as if it implied a personal rejection. While, Marina expressed the importance of her food being appreciated in the following comment:

> "Sometimes I had visitors and everybody will eat from my food, the food I made...Yes, to them (specially: her children) it was a banquet! (Marina 1, 3).

Furthermore, a Latin American community worker reminded me that the meaning of food may be strongly connected to people's origin. Latin American women, coming from Third World countries, who had experienced food insecurity may value food more. However, because of their experiences with food insecurity they may be also more concerned about satisfying food needs first and they may do so with very limited incomes. Thus, Latin American women may be less motivated to participate in Collective Kitchens for either the savings or food made as they may be competent in preparing economic and nutritious food. This community worker told me that food to Latin Americans was first while the rest follows, or *la comida es lo primero despues todo lo demas*.

In the view of this community worker the main motivation for Latin American women's participation in Collective Kitchens was not the food itself; however, food could be the motive for low income Canadian women participating in Collective Kitchens. At the same time that Latin American women may participate for reasons beyond food as a resource, their greater experience with non expensive food preparation may be an asset to others. It could reduce a groups' stress levels, by making it easier for them as a group to balance nutrition, taste and food costs.

Collective Kitchens may also encourage the participation of Latin American women because food preparation is congruent with traditional gender role expectations common in their countries of origin (Campfens, 1989). Despite the diversity existing among Latin Americans, food preparation may continue to be an activity of interest for many Latin American women of more traditional backgrounds (Castex, 1994; Herberg, 1988). Because food preparation is congruent with gender role expectations and it could be interpreted as non-threatening by participants and their families, the potential of Collective Kitchens for attracting Latin American women to participate could be important.

Furthermore, participation in groups seems to be generally valued by Latin Americans. From the literature, a researcher, Gutierrez (1991), found in her study with Latinos in the United States that the group setting itself provided opportunities for mutual support and understanding which were valued by participants. Group participation was also identified as valuable and in itself rewarding by Maria, a key informant, as the following quote illustrates:

> "Many people who came just to participate. It was always like that, many Hispanics coming to all the meetings to be part of the community. ...And the same with the Collective Kitchens, they were very happy to come and be part of it. Often we couldn't do enough for all of them. It was obvious that the people enjoyed participating. They liked to be part of...in whatever area, education, cooking skills and so on" (Maria).

Most importantly, collaborators themselves noted the value of group participation. Magenta participated in Collective Kitchens mainly to prepare food for other participants. She recognized that she enjoyed participating because she loved the company of others and the opportunity to communicate with them as she stated:

> "It is a very good idea and there are a lot of savings. Of course I have never cooked for myself, not even once. Isn't it? Because I am alone, it is not convenient for me and I do not like frozen food...They go to Collective Kitchens for the same reasons I go: for the company, for the community, for the communication. To be entertained a few hours in something that benefits also other people. That is what I think. They get together there and hours pass. It is a good time..." (Magenta 1, 4).

In summary, the technical aspects that Collective Kitchens emphasized were identified. Within the Collective Kitchens Handbook the concerns with the preparation of non-expensive food are described (EBH, 1992). The value and importance of developing meaningful relationships within Collective Kitchens was also identified by collaborators and was a value that Talbot (1995) confirmed the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec had discovered. Therefore, two aspects, technical and non technical, became visible. However, a third aspect was still to emerge.

Maria noted that Collective Kitchens should develop not only beyond the perspective that would focus on "cooking to economize" but also beyond a perspective that would focus on the development of meaningful relationships among participants. Her concern with the purpose of Collective Kitchens, or the reason(s) why women like herself needed to cook together in groups for their families, encouraged her to focus on societal issues. She also perceived a need for solidarity and consciousness development among participants. In her view focusing more on the causes that compelled women to cook in groups could encourage the development of increased awareness of a common cause and solidarity among

participants. She identified these aspects as crucial in moving beyond the development of "friendly" Collective Kitchens. She said:

> "Now to me, what was really important was to develop consciousness in the people, the why. Precisely the why of Collective Kitchens. Because it was not only about being together there "comadreando," (chatting or sharing) happy and all that." (Maria).

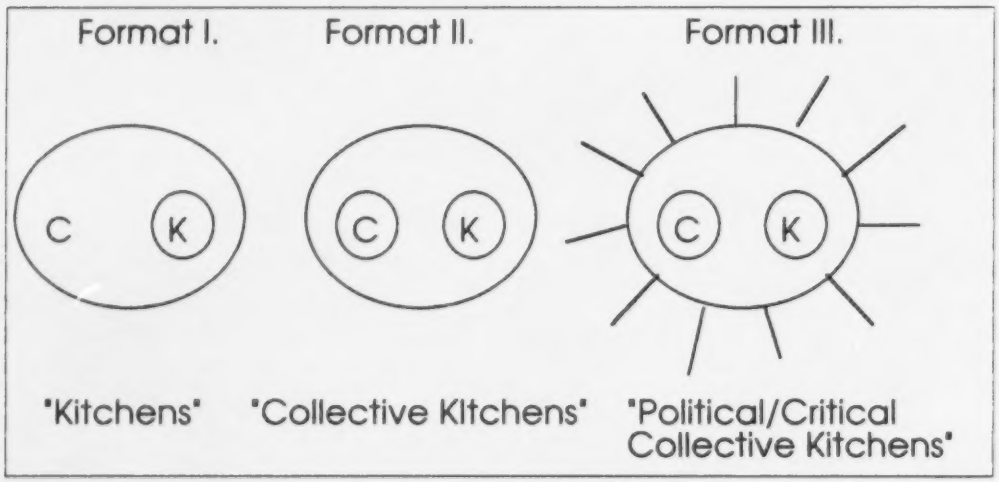
Maria's insights shaped a format of Collective Kitchens that could be both political and critical. Her personal discovery was also part of a process. For example, in the beginning, she had been unclear about her concerns. She said that only after a representative from *Comedores Populares* of Peru came to visit Casa Celeste, did some of her concerns start to take a definite shape. Mariela, a representative from Peru, shared her experiences of *Comedores Populares* with Latin American women participating in Collective Kitchens that were coordinated by Maria. Learning about *Comedores Populares* helped Maria. Her concerns about Collective Kitchens gained focus; a process that she described as follows:

> "In those days (before Mariela's visit), without even knowing about the Comedores Populares in Peru, that (vision) was my vision. How to enlarge and extend it, growing in that (growing in Collective Kitchens)..." "...We had the instructions Mariela left (after Mariela's visit)...For instance we have/had about ten people very interested in that (a new form of Collective Kitchen: auto financed)...The service could be volunteer, and (we have) the people who will come to buy. Now the problem was whether we could receive the money to start all that: from where? The first fund, that is the one that allows you to go on. In Peru they began with money from the government, an emergency fund...But here, I do not know if that could be done....But, well, I imagined that it would be easier here (in Canada). Really they clipped our wings, that there was no money...(and so on)" (Maria).

Information about *Comedores Populares* shaped Maria's vision of what Collective Kitchens should be. *Comedores Populares* became Maria's model for Collective Kitchens. Through Maria's insights, the political nature of Collective Kitchens became clear; that is, three major possibilities became visible. Program oriented, process oriented, and political, critical and/or movement oriented Collective Kitchens were possible.

Three abstractions of Collective Kitchens emerged from these reflections. They were encouraged by insights that collaborators shared in the study. They were also nurtured by the analysis of the following documents: the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992), the documentary entitled "Stir it up" (NFB, 1994), and the report from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec (Regroupment des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994) (See Appendices C and E). For clarity, the three formats that emerged were represented in a diagram.

Figure 5. 1: Collective Kitchens' Formats



Each format is represented, in Figure 5.1, by an ellipse that has two letters inside, a "C" for Collective and a "K" for Kitchen. Around each letter there may be a circle. When both, the Kitchen or technical and the Collective or relationship related aspects are identified concerns, both letters are encircled. In Format III there are "spikes" merging from the ellipse. This format is represented by Collective Kitchens that have developed connections with other Collective Kitchens.

The purpose in sharing these formats is to encourage the development of the potential of Collective Kitchens through increased awareness of the challenges that Collective Kitchens could encounter while developing that potential. The formats are

not to be used to classify Collective Kitchens. They are only images from the researcher's mind, inspired by reflection to facilitate further reflection and understanding about Collective Kitchens. A more detailed description of the three formats follows.

Format I: "Kitchens"

The focus of this first format is on technical aspects; that is, the dominant concerns are technical. Objectives within this format would be similar to objectives expressed within the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992). These are objectives basically related to the activity of cooking nutritious food within a budget. They include the following: to make low cost, nutritious meals for participants' families; to learn and share information about nutritious low cost foods, to demonstrate shopping tips and healthy cooking methods; and to develop skills that enable participants to better meet the nutritional needs of their families. The specific skills to be developed are: food management which includes planning, budgeting, shopping and preparing food as well as time management skills (EBH, 1992).

The methods discussed to achieve the objectives are described in general terms as methods that will cultivate participants' resourcefulness. More specific references to methods include the following: to make use of existing resources, such as sharing the knowledge already available among participants; to utilize cooking facilities available or facilities generally located within the neighbourhood such as agencies, schools or churches; and lastly, to implement a system by which both participants and sponsors contribute financially, in order to encourage participants to share the financial responsibility (EBH, 1992).

Facilitators are described as volunteer coordinators designated by sponsors of Collective Kitchens. Collective Kitchens' participants are described as low income people. Participants could be single parents, adults with mental health concerns and parents of low income families; that is, people who are defined and perceived as

able to benefit from and contribute to group cooking experiences. Primary and secondary benefits could result from participation in Collective Kitchens. For example, learning how to prepare nutritious and non-expensive food in addition to the actual food product of Collective Kitchens' activities, are the primary benefits. Overcoming isolation, communicating with people who share similar concerns, building a sense of community and encouraging participants to feel good about themselves are described as valuable secondary benefits (EBH, 1992).

The writing style of the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992) is simplistic. For example, a large font size is used throughout except in the introductory page and pages thirty five to thirty eight which specifically address sponsors and coordinators. The purpose for the use of simplistic English style and large font size is explained in the following quote:

> "The first part (of the handbook) consists of five sections and is the "how-to" manual on operating a collective kitchens. It is the story of one collective kitchen and is written in clear language so that all participants can use the information. This includes the large number of people whose first language is not English" (EBH, 1992).

In this study the findings support the used of simplistic English in the handbook. The comments within the findings showed that difficulty with English was reported as a challenge by most collaborators. Even those who received language training commented that they experienced difficulties in expressing themselves fluently in English. Most collaborators reported that they felt more comfortable participating in Collective Kitchens where Spanish, their native language, was spoken. Therefore, the Collective Kitchens Handbook's effort towards reaching immigrants, or Canadians, with limited English skills is warranted (EBH, 1992).

Lack of English literacy is an issue for many immigrants coming from Third World countries; an issue that today is particularly important because migration from Third World countries has increased (Allmen, 1988; Castex, 1994; Kalbach, 1991;

Yelaja & O'Neill, 1988). Although a review of previous research showed that the educational levels of immigrants as a group were overall higher than the educational levels attained by the Canadian-born, there was greater variation among immigrants. The gap between the highly educated and the least educated immigrants was generally greater and it affected particularly immigrant women, who were more likely to have less schooling in their native language and more difficulties, because of this, in learning English (Boyd, 1992; Klassen & Burnaby, 1993).

However, to encourage inclusiveness of people from varied cultural backgrounds Collective Kitchens must look beyond ensuring that the Collective Kitchens Handbook is easy to read. Such an approach would limit Collective Kitchens to a very technical focus, which would be similar to learning basic food preparation skills or fulfilling concerns with food as a resource. Secondary benefits, such as developing friendships or meaningful relationships, although valuable may not be addressed because they would require a greater focus on communication and quality relationships. Participants' communicative ability could be a serious challenge for Collective Kitchens that would push the focus beyond technical concerns.

Opportunities for meaningful communication need to be provided within Collective Kitchens if isolation can be overcome, friendships developed and community build. These aspects, mentioned as valuable secondary benefits within the Collective Kitchens Handbook, have probably been neglected because a dominant technical focus; this focus could have detrimentally affected the development of quality relationships, even among participants whose first language is English. Participants with limited English skills would encounter, because of their limitations with the language, even greater challenges in gaining from secondary benefits. Therefore, speaking participant's native language within Collective Kitchens

could be valuable and should be continued until English fluency is no longer an issue for them.

Importantly, communication is in and of itself rewarding and meaningful communication is easier to achieve if language is not a challenge. The skills required to express oneself in a second language and at the level of complexity needed for meaningful communication takes time to achieve. As well, language can be understood as a cultural value in and of itself. For example, communicating in one's native language is valuable, as argued by Martinez (1988) and illustrated by the following quote by Galeano (1978).

> "Then they looked at each other...I am sad, you are sad -said Ariel. The man said that together they would make a good pair of clowns and Ariel asked where, in what circus. In anyone -said the man. In any circus in my country. - And which is your country? Brazil, said the man. -Dam! Then I can tell you in Spanish! And they talked non-stop about their lost lands while the train continued to Paris" (Galeano, 1978, p. 95).

Furthermore, food preferences, in addition to language, would be a challenge for Collective Kitchens. Collaborators often referred to similarities in food preferences as an important motivation for participating in Collective Kitchens with other Latin American women. Sharing similar cultural backgrounds contributed to the enjoyment of participation. Probably, it became easier to reach agreement regarding the decisions related to food preparation because similarities in food preferences existed. Food preferences were discussed as being important by the collaborators and some marked differences, connected to origin were noted. For example, collaborators reported that rice is extensively used in Latin America while in North America there is a marked preference for salads. Cans and frozen foodstuffs are not common in Latin America where fresh foodstuffs are generally favoured. The use of salt and sugar were also noted as markedly different between Latin Americans and Canadians.

In spite of the challenges, some Latin American participants may welcome culturally mixed Collective Kitchens. The opportunity to practice English in a non-threatening environment, as Collective Kitchens can provide, was also perceived as valuable. Adelaida, for example, who has lived in Canada for more than ten years, felt comfortable in culturally mixed Collective Kitchens. She enjoyed the opportunity to practice English and develop friendships with English speaking and other Canadian women.

From the literature, Disman (1988) portrayed immigrants as naive anthropologists. They have to discover the culture, rules and values of their new country little by little, he argued; while, opportunities for more intimate knowledge that would allow them to access private aspects may be lacking. Adelaida could be at a stage in her adaptation process to Canadian life when more meaningful contacts with people are perceived as very valuable. This became apparent throughout the study and could be briefly illustrated by the following quote from her:

> "Having met those people (at Collective Kitchens). To be so close with them and to know their way of thinking, talking..." (Adelaida 1, 2).

In summary, Collective Kitchens that are strongly concerned with technical aspects, such as the development of skills related to food preparation, face considerable challenges in achieving the potential primary benefits. The focus on skills and information could encourage the neglect of important areas of group development; such as, developing quality relationships among participants. Excessive concerns with budgeting, while neglecting relationship aspects could encourage competition for resources among participants rather than collaboration and friendship.

Furthermore, Collective Kitchens concerned primarily with technical aspects would also encounter challenges in developing potential secondary benefits. When participants from varied linguistic and/or cultural backgrounds with limited English

skills join the groups, the challenges increase. As a result, issues related to English language fluency need to be considered. In addition, cultural issues related to food preferences add to the difficulties because participants could have significantly different taste preferences, which would be difficult to negotiate under conditions of limited English fluency.

Thus, the primary benefits of Collective Kitchens, as described within the objectives in the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992), could be achieved at the expense of secondary benefits. These Collective Kitchens would be consistent with Format I. However, if the achievement of meaningful participation and communication was a primary concern of Collective Kitchens, the need to focus on related issues would be obvious. Meaningful participation and communication are crucial in quality relationships and an emphasis on these aspects would be consistent with less technically focused Collective Kitchens. Format II, would best represent those Collective Kitchens.

Format II: "Collective Kitchens"

The focus of this format would be a balance of both technical and non-technical concerns. Technical concerns as included within the objectives in the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992) would apply. Non-technical concerns related to the development of quality relationships within Collective Kitchens, or the collective aspects, would be emphasized equitably. The Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992) has offered limited explicit methods of developing quality relationships among participants.

Furthermore, Johanne Talbot (1995) noted that the relationship aspect, although fundamental, had not been the focus of attention within Collective Kitchens until recently. She noted in her comments that the value of achieving meaningful relationships within Collective Kitchens came to the attention of organizers from the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec after information from

coordinators and participants was collected and examined. Talbot (1995) felt the organization ability to contact large numbers of Collective Kitchens enabled the area of human relationships to be discussed as challenging.

In response to the identified need of improving the quality of human relationships within Collective Kitchens, the Coalition of Quebec developed an entrance form to be completed by potential participants and an educational preparation session for both participants and coordinators of Collective Kitchens. The forms have been helpful in ensuring that information about participants' preferences and background is available and it is used to guide group selection and composition. The solution that the Coalition offered to the human relationship challenge was explained by Talbot (1995) as follows:

> "Before beginning Collective Kitchens they (participants) have to fill a form to give information about them, their families, on their children, allergies...We always asked them: do you want to cook with persons of similar ethnicity as you or would you like to cook with persons who are not? ...The training on Collective Kitchens lasts two days. We have one day on the practical (or the cooking) and we have another day for relations, on human relations...we work on examples" (Talbot, 1995).

Talbot (1995) also noted that there were important benefits when Collective Kitchens moved beyond a dominant concern with "cooking to economize." In Talbot's view, participants often needed help in developing quality relationships. She said that there are gains in encouraging participants within Collective Kitchens to improve the quality of their relationships and to favour constructive criticism. Learning to deal with difficulties at the right time, in a respectful manner and with the right person have benefited the participants. For example, she stated:

> "So, the problem has to be resolved with(in) the group. If it is a conflict of two personalities we have to take these persons separately from the others and they have to chat together, sometimes with a mediator who will be there...Because sometimes a fact is a fact but after everybody has talked about it is not the same thing anymore. So we give these kinds of "way to do" (guidelines) to women, so that one day they can be more "autonome"...But it is sure that this takes a couple of months and the coordinator of the Kitchens

> is there to show them, an example...the kind of affective leader (we discussed)..." (Talbot, 1995).

However, as one collaborator in this study mentioned, if the focus of Collective Kitchens continues to be on planning within limited budgets, the participants could experience added stress. When relationship quality is not attended and/or stress increases, relationships could become unfulfiling, disrespectful and sometimes abusive, For example, if the amount of financial help provided within Collective Kitchens is insufficient and conflicts over available resources would be encouraged. Food, which could be understood as a resource, would be perceived as limited and become the source of conflict. One method of avoiding conflicts would be to make the budget more generous. Sponsors could increase their contribution and encourage a less competitive and resource oriented atmosphere. Measures to increase the budget or other resources would be measures of explicitly decreasing the emphasis placed on budgeting and could contribute to improved relationships within Collective Kitchens. These measures would be particularly beneficial if participants perceived that food was the main reason for their participation in Collective Kitchens. Marita, who was concerned about this challenge, expressed her view in the following manner:

> "Because if this program is for people of low resources they should help each other more! The help should be, for example, of twenty dollars and the participant should pay around fifteen dollars then you would have thirty five dollars or so. Because right now you cannot eat with 5 dollars. Because it is assumed that each dish costs around 7 dollars isn't it? But here you cannot eat with 7 dollars." (Marita 1, 1).

Furthermore, the development of relationships or a collective spirit within Collective Kitchens could be favoured by real or perceived similarities among participants. Linguistic, cultural or personal similarities would contribute to the spirit. For example, collaborators often shared implicit perceptions revealing that they saw themselves different from other Canadian. They perceived themselves (Latin American women) to be particularly concerned about their children's well being,

which was expressed through concerns about their children's food preferences. This common concern as well as their common Third World origin, the language they shared and cultural similarities probably contributed to the development of a group identity. The group identity, in turn, probably contributed to the development of meaningful relationships among them. Maria's comments illustrate these ideas:

> "Hispanic women are always very concerned with what their children are going to eat. We plan a day before to make the budget and always someone said: I would like to cook this or that because my children love this...All their lives Hispanics, Hispanic women, worried about their children, or sometimes about their husbands...However, on the other side, Canadian women never worry about this. They didn't care whether the food was accepted by their children, they took it anyway. Hispanics always worried about what their children liked" (Maria).

However, despite the value of quality relationships within Collective Kitchens, the need to go even beyond this aspect was also revealed in this study. Maria was particularly concerned with moving beyond either the technical aspects, or the friendship development aspect, to what Maria herself called "comadrear." She stated that she wanted to develop relationships within Collective Kitchens that were more than friendly; relationships that would encourage participants to become concerned with deeper societal issues. In her view, there was a need for greater understanding of societal aspects connected to Collective Kitchens. As a result, Political/Critical Collective Kitchens, or the third format, emerged.

Format III:"Political/Critical Collective Kitchens"

Maria, an educator who favoured participatory education models for Collective Kitchens, was especially concerned with the need to move beyond the development of friendly Collective Kitchens. Deeper levels of communication, that included increased consciousness and reflection about the purpose of Collective Kitchens, was what she wanted to discuss. In Maria's view, the development of solidarity among participants was not sufficiently encouraged, within Collective Kitchens. The following quote from her illustrates this:

> "And there are many things...For instance, (that) solidarity with one another, (that) sensibility of being able to see the need others have, (that) of trying to help each other. That, (which) is what we have in Latin America, that of helping each other not that egoism, that this is mine and only mine, but to share with everyone..." (Maria).

In the literature, solidarity is defined as agreement and unity in opinion, interests and efforts (Paikeday, 1970). It also implies a deeper level of communication among participants, and the development of trust (Scott, 1992). Solidarity requires greater awareness and reflection, as well as development of ownership encouraging and allowing decision making by the participants. Maria facilitated the groups she coordinated and her Collective Kitchens were often the source of ideas for other programs. For example, workshops frequently emerged from the needs perceived by participants within Collective Kitchens' planning sessions, Maria said:

> "Often...other programs were born when we met for the Collective Kitchens. I do remember that once we were really interested about the problems of social justice in our own countries. Because we always talked about our problems of oppression, of hunger, of unemployment in our countries" (Maria).

Two themes became salient in connection with Maria's comments about Political/Critical Collective Kitchens. The first theme, emerging mainly from the findings, highlighted the importance of facilitation. Within the collaborators' comments, desirable qualities of a facilitator were identified when collaborators described Maria as a stepping stone, or as someone who made valuable contributions to their Collective Kitchens. In describing Maria's qualities, they pointed out the characteristics they perceived were crucial for an effective Collective Kitchens' coordinator. For example, the quality of enthusiasm or magic that motivates other people, was essential. The ability to help others in material and moral senses, was also important. Advocacy in favour of participants in addition to other personal qualities, such as being a noble person and/or encouraging participants to learn, were both noted. Finally, the collaborators discussed the methods of an

effective facilitator and Maria was described as teaching in ways that did not interfere with participants' opportunities to learn by themselves.

The second theme emerged from the dialogue with Marita and the literature. The literature discusses the value of departing from personal stories by acknowledging them and making life more open to examination and reflection. Furthermore, when acknowledging personal stories in a group setting, participants begin personal transformations. In other words, knowing personal stories in relation to other participants' stories would help to see stories in context and become enlightened. Enlightenment has been defined by Vaines (1988) as knowing one's own story in the context of the stories of others. It is because of this process that participants would be better able to discover connections and contradictions between what is and what should be, a process described in the following quote as the beginning of a critical orientation.

> "Hultgren (1987) discusses this as critical orientation. She notes that knowing our story in relation to other stories connect us with our community and we see better the contradictions we may be living" (Vaines, 1988, p. 10).

Enlightenment also involves developing awareness of who we are and how we came to be, so that we can become active actors in the choices we make. Therefore, providing opportunities for participants to share and reflect on personal concerns is the beginning of a critical orientation. Furthermore, self awareness contributes to authenticity and/or wholeness (Vaines, 1988). This means that what we believe, say and do becomes integrated and consistent with what is and what should be. Self awareness and authenticity could deepen relationships among people. Trust begins to develop while the ability to accomplish objectives increases. Personal development, as described here, has valuable contributions to make to any community development initiative (Barrett, 1989).

Barrett (1989), a researcher who focused on how personal development theory could contribute to community development theory, discussed how greater personal awareness and authenticity should contribute to the deepening of psychological ties among group participants or community members. She says that the need for increased solidarity, consciousness and personal development are interconnected. According to her, personal development could make a contribution to community development because participants know their inner natures more or they have increased their self awareness. Barrett (1989) says that it is crucial that each participant must gain self awareness to make group development increasingly meaningful.

Barrett's (1989) ideas also apply to Collective Kitchens, which are perceived as community development initiatives. Increasing personal awareness could facilitate the development of quality, meaningful relationships among Collective Kitchens participants or, in other words, be the beginning of a critical orientation for them. From this beginning which is rooted in increased authenticity, a critical orientation could encourage participants to move towards increased understanding of societal issues. A critical orientation focuses on comparing what is with what should be, at both personal and societal levels, and leads to an increased understanding of what is beyond the ordinary. Because a critical orientation favours reflection that could render the unfamiliar familiar, or make the invisible visible, it encourages emancipation from unconsciously held assumptions (Aoki, 1987, 1979).

The outcome of a critical orientation could be participants taking action since shared concerns could encourage personal and/or social action. In turn, social action would also encourage increased awareness and personal transformation, if it is selected by participants (Scott, 1992). Within Collective Kitchens, participants' increased self awareness and reflection could encourage the development of Collective Kitchens that include the critical aspect or Collective Kitchens wherein

participants compare what is with what should be in areas that are relevant to them. These areas would include Collective Kitchens themselves, as a phenomenon that requires understanding and reflection. Therefore, Collective Kitchens that encourage a critical orientation would become political in the sense that they would encourage a questioning attitude or move beyond concerns with the development of friendly groups and favour, instead, deeper critical relationships that could evolve into organizations such as coalitions. Some participants perceived Collective Kitchens as political, as illustrated by the following quote:

> "I feel the Collective Kitchen groups, yes, are political. Because for me, my definition of something which is political is: as soon as there is a sort of, that the persons get conscious about their needs and rights to feed their families and (they) want to live with dignity. I say that it begins to be a political movement" (NFB, 1994),

The development of a critical/political orientation in the context of Collective Kitchens could be encouraged through participants' self awareness or increased consciousness. For example, Maria's own personal experience as an educator, both a participant and a coordinator of Collective Kitchens, and a political refugee from a Third World country, must have contributed to her understanding of Collective Kitchens. Her experience could have encouraged her to reflect and to question the taken for granted aspects of Collective Kitchens.

Wilson (1988), provides support for the above description of Maria's experiences. He pointed out that immigrants or refugees threatened by cross cultural dialogue, revert to automatic conceptualization, or lack of reflection, and they favour a tendency to become very set in their perceptions. Immigrants have had opportunity to question their taken-for-granted reality because they have experienced an alternative reality in the country of arrival. The following comments from Maria illustrate this view:

> "As she was focusing in what happiness for people was...I felt strange about that type of philosophy...To me happiness is to see my country free of so

> much oppression by foreign countries, free of so much ugliness and hatred against the poor, free of so much need. That there are no social services, there is no help whatsoever, people over there dies of need. It is the truth! So to me that would be happiness. That our countries could develop in a truly democratic environment, but democratic, legitimate. Power to the people is everything" (Maria).

Contrastingly, experiences of incongruency, or gaps in taken-for-granted everyday life, can facilitate the achievement of double vision which in turn could favour a questioning attitude. Double vision was described by Aoki (1978) with a poetic metaphor, in the image of "the sakura and the rose". He discusses double vision within the context of bicultural experiences. His descriptions shared interesting similarities with a bifocal vision that is encouraged by a critical orientation to knowledge. A bifocal vision encourages constant comparisons between what is and what should be (Morgaine, 1992b). However, while Aoki (1978) has discussed double vision as the almost inevitable result of bicultural experiences, bifocal vision has been described more as the result of conscious reflection.

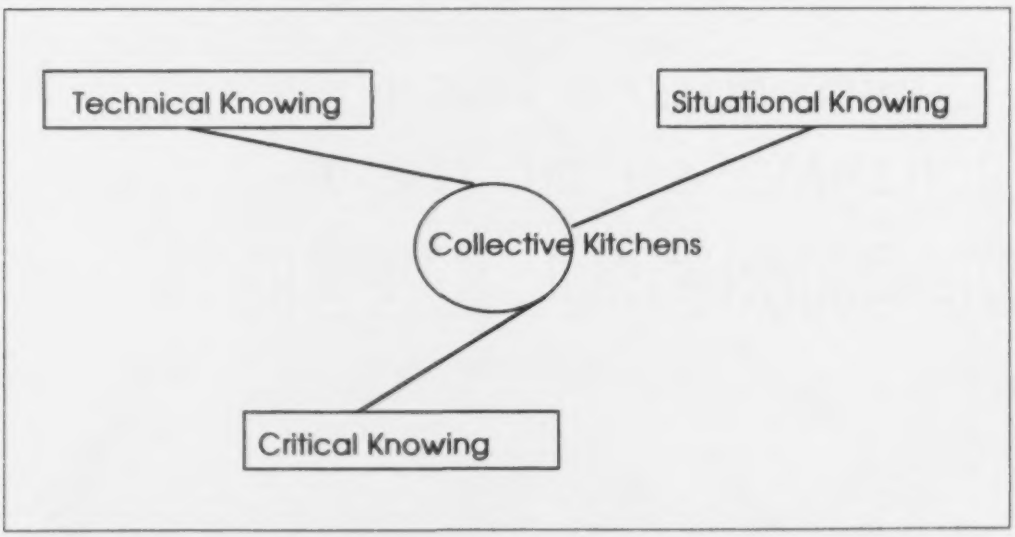
In summary, Critical/Political Collective Kitchens, or the third format, emerged from reflecting about the insights that Maria shared, the document documents and the pertinent literature. Maria's experiences as an educator trained in participatory education, a refugee in the United States and an immigrant in Canada probably contributed to her insightful contribution. Increased awareness about Format III could be included as part of a process within Collective Kitchens that would encourage the integration of personal and community development perspectives within an emancipatory paradigm. After the formats emerged within the researcher, the similarities between them and the different paradigms of knowledge that are described in the literature, became evident. The three forms of knowing or knowledge paradigms are discussed in relation to Collective Kitchens in the next section.

Forms of Knowing

In the literature from the discipline of education, Aoki (1979, 1987) argued in favour of integrating what he perceived as different perspectives in curriculum evaluation. He favoured the view that three paradigms of knowledge, technical, interpretive and critical, existed and they needed to be integrated for meaningful curriculum decisions. Since Collective Kitchens can be perceived as educational ventures, literature relevant to education and specifically related to knowledge paradigms, becomes relevant to Collective Kitchens.

The technical, instrumental or means-ends, paradigm focuses on practical work, or activities and skills; it is generally concerned with control. The situational or interpretive paradigm focuses on both communication and understanding of meanings. Finally, the critical or emancipatory paradigm focuses on reflection and critical knowing. The following discussion makes explicit both perceived and implicit connections between the formats previously discussed and forms of knowing or knowledge paradigms. The development of the potential of Collective Kitchens could be facilitated by identifying these connections.

Figure 5. 2: Forms of Knowing or Knowledge paradigms.



Technical Knowing

The concerns within this form of knowing focus on achieving specific ends or goals efficiently. The development of skills, such as food preparation, within Collective Kitchens' concerns, are congruent with the technical paradigm. The Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH,1992) addresses primarily technical concerns related to skill development in food and time management. Furthermore, technical knowing is also congruent with a perception of food as a product, or food as the end result of the activities or work of participants within Collective Kitchens. In this case food is perceived as an end while the Collective Kitchens are the means by which the end, of food provision, is reached.

A detached stance is generally favoured by the knower within this paradigm. A similar stance could be unwillingly encouraged among participants in Collective Kitchens. The technical paradigm, when dominant, would encourage a view of Collective Kitchens as programs or means to reach ends. Ends defined beforehand, could be perceived as the objectives to be met. The Collective Kitchens Handbook encourages an understanding of Collective Kitchens that is technical. Collective Kitchens are portrayed as programs with clearly defined objectives, or the WHAT of Collective Kitchens, is the main concern (EBH, 1992). Importantly, a technical focus favours technical objectives. For example, there are primary and secondary objectives defined, but only primary objectives are specifically explained, while secondary objectives are not given attention probably because it could be assumed that they will fulfill themselves naturally.

In summary, when concerns with technical objectives and ends become dominant, concerns with methods, participants' perceptions or inputs about Collective Kitchens could be limited. Concerns with technical objectives would rule and limit the possibilities for deeper understandings. Questioning is not encouraged in this paradigm because technical solutions are perceived as best. Collective Kitchens

that emphasize the technical paradigm could be understood as programs which address the needs of low income participants and favour their involvement in solving food issues that affect them, through learning to prepare economic and nutritious food with financial support from sponsors (EBH, 1992). Technical oriented Collective Kitchens are congruent with Format I, "Kitchens" previously described within this Chapter.

Situational Knowing

The main concern of this form of knowing is communication and meanings. Situational knowing encourages learning from a perspective or situated knowing. It accepts the existence of many perspectives, or that reality is subject to interpretation. In addition, it recognizes the value in clarifying meanings to reach understandings. The knower is not detached but close to the phenomenon to be known. Within Collective Kitchens this could mean that the knowledge of participants is meaningfully recognized.

Situational knowing encourages a perspective of Collective Kitchens that highlights process; that is, the HOW of Collective Kitchens becomes crucial. The process becomes the focus of concern while objectives or goals become less important and secondary to the process. For example, typologies of community development, that were previously discussed in the literature review, described community development perspectives in terms of program and methods, process, and grassroots movements. Community development, if understood as process, focuses on educational concerns with personal transformation for action; while change at the community level aims at community self determination. Two aspects can then be identified from this literature. They are: the importance of education for change and of self determination or ownership (Campfens et al, 1992).

Concerns with both aspects should be emphasized within Collective Kitchens that claim to encourage situational knowing. Education for change for participants

departs from increased personal awareness and understanding. This process of increased personal awareness was described in connection with Format II: "Collective Kitchens". Vaines (1988), described situation knowing as being familiar with personal stories. She said that knowing personal stories could facilitate the achievement of wholeness or authenticity. At community level, and in order to achieve a level of community self-determination Labonte (1990) notes that the process must include participants' personal development efforts as well as participants' meaningful input into decision making.

In the dialogue with collaborators, a measure of both increased personal awareness and understanding in addition to a level of decision making by collaborators, could be identified. For example, collaborators' experiences within Collective Kitchens included increased awareness about their backgrounds. For example, Maria referred to the lengthy dialogues Latin American women engaged in about their countries of origin. As well, collaborators commented that the discussion during the planning sessions included sharing concerns that were personal and that transcended food issues. Often topics for other activities and workshops emerged from the concerns of the participants and these workshops were later implemented to address participants' concerns. The dialogue among participants illustrated that both increased awareness about personal stories, in the context of other stories, as well as a degree of decision making occurred regarding issues that transcended food.

However, if objective or goals are the focus and concerns related to process are not addressed, a community based programming approach, rather than community development, is favoured. Concerns about community based programming have been discussed by researchers such as Labonte (1989, 1990). However, these concerns may not have been properly identified and/or discussed within the context of Collective Kitchens. Furthermore, Collective Kitchens have

been defined within the Collective Kitchens Handbook as community based programs (EBH, 1992).

Different from community based programming, community development implies that the problem defined in the community flows from the members upwards, and that members have decision making power. Community based programming generally takes the agenda of the government to local community groups. The recent primary focus has been reducing requesting community groups to find solutions to their problems without ensuring increased access to resources for solving them.

In summary, Collective Kitchens that favour a situational paradigm would encourage problem definition from participants because this view would be congruent with increased self awareness about personal issues. The focus of Collective Kitchens would be on communication and sharing of meanings to clarify issues and concerns. Increased authenticity could develop and favour an emphasis on a community development approach that departs from personal self awareness as the base for personal growth and transformation. A community based programming approach implying that external concerns are imposed on participants, in and of itself could be an element that disrupts the development of wholeness and authenticity and it would not be congruent with situational knowing.

Critical Knowing

The main focus of this form of knowing is on reflection, or deeper sharing which can encourage a bifocal view. Thus, what "is" is perceived in perspective of what "should be," favouring conscious awareness of the discrepancies between ideals and experienced reality. A dominant interest with the improvement of human conditions is present. Social transformation towards a more humanistic society has been part of this knowledge paradigm. Through exploration and questioning of

interests, values, assumptions and implications for human actions, transformation could occur.

Critical knowing, however, cannot be easily separated from situational knowing because increased self awareness about personal stories, in the context of the personal stories of others, could favour a critical stance. Mutually reflective activities could make the unconscious conscious, and the unproblematic problematic. Therefore, while the WHAT helped define the interests of technical knowing, and the HOW helped define the interests of situational knowing, the WHY could help define the interests of critical knowing. Despite process being a concern of critical knowing or the beginning of a critical orientation, concerns with emancipation and societal issues are also aspects of the critical paradigm (Morgaine, 1992b; Vaines, 1988)

The assumption of progress towards liberation underlies critical knowing and makes it congruent with grassroots movements towards emancipation. The community development typologies that were identified in the literature review of this study included grassroots movements, with community control and empowerment as their goals, as forms of community development (Campfens et al, 1992). Coalitions are grassroots movements because they represent broadening of public concern and momentum for social change (Labonte, 1990). It is because coalitions usually represent a direct politicization of an issue that they have potential for change. Labonte (1990) noted that a concern about deeper structures of power and political action is crucial to coalitions.

Therefore, the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec could be understood as a grassroots movement. The Coalition defined Collective Kitchens as encouraging pride, dignity and taking charge but, most importantly, as connected to societal issues. Organizers from the Coalition have maintained contact with the membership, or affiliated Collective Kitchens, through phone, mail or in person. The

Coalition's newsletter has addressed issues related to Collective Kitchens as well as policy issues of interest to the members. Furthermore, the Coalition has been involved in action research with the Universities of Montreal and Laval. The research project included collaborators with a women's group from Relais. The connection between Collective Kitchens and current social and political circumstances was made in the Coalition's documents as follows:

> "It is not a secret that Collective Kitchens are the result of political problems due to the unequal distribution of resources. Women must know that acting they can transform their poverty and their living situation. Their discoveries within Collective Kitchens is not uniquely focused in managing poverty. This proceeding of people collectively in charge becomes a place to nourish reflection and to give a conscientization that encourages to act, within a mind frame of social transformation" (Regroupement des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994).

In summary, Collective Kitchens favouring critical knowing could be understood as a grassroots movement. This understanding is congruent with a form of community development that favours social transformation. Furthermore, critical knowing encourages reflection of what is in the context of what should be, in order to encourage both self and social transformation. The Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec could be an example of applying critical knowing in the context of Collective Kitchens. The Coalition departed from the assumption that the social situation needs to be addressed. Labonte (1990) says that coalitions encourage the politization of issues. Coalitions favour an increased information flow between individual Collective Kitchens as well as between the Coalition and the membership. The Coalition has already utilized the positive aspects of this characteristic by documenting and analyzing the information that the individual Collective Kitchens provided for the benefit of both the Coalition and the membership; thereby, increasing understanding about Collective Kitchens.

In general, the integration of forms of knowing within the context of Collective Kitchens has potential for the enrichment of participant's experiences in

that it facilitates the opportunities for participants to become empowered. For example, by ensuring that opportunities for situational knowing are provided, participants' personal development could be facilitated. In turn, personal development contributes to increasingly meaningful relationships and to the development of a critical orientation. Because quality relationships and increased consciousness continue to be challenges for Collective Kitchens, increased attention to both situational and critical knowledge is required. Furthermore, technical knowledge, when directed by the concerns of participants, is valuable. Therefore, a balance of technical, situational and critical knowing is needed to enrich participants' experiences in Collective Kitchens.

There are dangers in failing to integrate the three paradigms of knowledge within the context of Collective Kitchens. Often, it has been assumed by the public that Collective Kitchens offer a valuable alternative for participants or a dignified solution to the problem of food scarcity. It may be assumed that as participants are more active within Collective Kitchens they are also more in control of their lives, and therefore subjects of action. However, participants in Collective Kitchens are often limited in decision making and, generally, able to only decide what recipes to prepare within suggested and frequently restricted budgets. While the group setting and related possibilities constitute one of the greatest potentials for learning about relationships in Collective Kitchens they are often not pursued. Given this, it may be difficult to argue that within Collective Kitchens participants are provided with opportunities for empowering themselves. Furthermore, Collective Kitchens can become very technical and within them reflection is not favoured. These technically focused Collective Kitchens fail to contribute to the development of quality relationships, solidarity and/or awareness about personal/societal concerns as well as their connections.

Finally, after reflecting upon the results of the research which are presented in Chapter Four: Findings, three formats of Collective Kitchens became evident to the researcher. The process for arriving at the formats as well as descriptions of the formats were included within the beginning section of this chapter. In addition, the three paradigms of knowledge, that acted as a stimulus, were also described. In the next section of this chapter, the four issues that were selected as most salient for Collective Kitchens to address, are discussed. They are ordered from a micro to a macro level.

Issues for discussion

Four issues related to gender, community, socioeconomic and cultural aspects are discussed within this section. Their sequence, is related to the ecological framework that facilitated their emergence as issues of concern within the context of Collective Kitchens. The potential of Collective Kitchens could increase from an increased awareness of these issues, although they may be challenging. The issues emerged from the researcher's reflection about concerns that have been commonly mentioned by collaborators as well as those that were noted in the analysis of documents and in the literature review that was presented.

The gender issue

The activities performed within Collective Kitchens are not gender neutral, but performed generally by women. Collaborators, in spite of being women, exhibited a strong tendency to describe themselves as participants in Collective Kitchens in gender neutral terms. For example, collaborators' definitions of Collective Kitchens included gender neutral terms. They referred to "people" planning, "people" shopping and "people" preparing meals, rather than to women as the participants who were performing these activities. However, one collaborator, Marita, perceived gender in relation to the identity of Collective Kitchens' participants.

Gender was noted by Marita who defined Collective Kitchens as the collective work of women who facilitated learning from each other. Furthermore, Marita reported that she had been disappointed when she discovered that men were allowed to participate in Collective Kitchens activities at Casa Celeste. In her view Casa Celeste was a women's organization and, therefore, no man was to become involved in any of its activities. The presence of men, in her view, negatively affected the quality of communication and of relationships that women could develop among themselves.

However, despite Marita's perception, Casa Celeste did not perceive itself as a women's organization. Casa Celeste developed from a women's advocacy group, but, since it became incorporated as a non-profit organization, it no longer was perceived as a women's group. People living within the geographical community where Casa Celeste was located, however, may have been unaware of this and some could continue to consider Casa Celeste, as Marita did, a women's group.

Gender, however, was particularly conspicuous within the context of Collective Kitchens because of its complete absence. The presence of gender neutral terms in the description an activity, such as food preparation, which is generally perceived in connection with women, is always surprising. For example, throughout the Collective Kitchens Handbook (EBH, 1992) gender neutral words, such as people, have been constantly selected. The following quotes illustrate this: "people living on a limited income," "small groups of people cooking together," "people who prepare food for themselves and their children," "low-income people to feed themselves and their families well." Although, the references were about people, the testimonials, the pictures and the concerns are from and about women (EBH, 1992; NFB, 1994).

A decision favouring gender neutral terms may have been taken in order to welcome men in activities still generally perceived as feminine. However, the effects

that such measures could have on women need to be addressed. The language that is used may be interpreted as negating women by making them invisible in areas where they have been traditionally present. Thus, women's work would be negated within Collective Kitchens by failing to acknowledge it. For example, collaborators themselves failed to acknowledge the female quality of their identities, preferring instead to use gender neutral terms similar to the ones used in the Collective Kitchens Handbook. Attempts at making women invisible, even if made in order to encourage a form of equality, should be questioned because the attempts have the potential to detrimentally affect women (Code, 1991; Miller, 1986).

Making gender invisible is a form of denying women's experiences and of perceiving gender as non-problematic (Code, 1991). That participants within Collective Kitchens are generally women becomes unimportant and the message is one of denial. Even when the activity performed is strongly, and traditionally, connected to the gender of participants, they are not acknowledged in gender terms or as the women they are. Gender, perceived as non-problematic, easily becomes a non-issue. This approach can seriously contribute to the reproduction and maintenance of gender traditional values and perceptions as well as to give support to the notion that women's place is in the kitchen.

Importantly, women from Third World countries, generally from more traditional backgrounds, may be particularly vulnerable to this approach. A long tradition of male supremacy over women inherent in patriarchal ideology all over the world and made more oppressive by the increasing conditions of poverty that are prevalent in the Third World, silently encourages non-questioning attitudes and women's invisibility (Campfens, 1989; Cuba & Vattuone, 1994; MacLeod & Shin, 1990).

Furthermore, as the focus of Collective Kitchens on food preparation may particularly appeal to low income women, who may perceive greater advantages

of preparing non-expensive food in a group setting, this non-problematic approach to gender could affect them most. Perceptions that poverty is connected with lack of technical knowledge rather than with structural inequality could also be favoured. Women, who are at the greatest disadvantage, could be subjected to the greatest invisibility.

Research with non-government organizations (NGOs) working within Third World countries showed that these organizations may not be interested in gender issues as part of a political agenda. Such an approach could be perceived as problematic when government funding continues to be required for implementing the organizations' projects. International NGOs strategies, generally focus their work with women on the provision of basics, such as food, clothing and items. Findings and concerns from the research with NGOs could apply to the work of all non-profit organizations in Canada (Campfens et al, 1992).

In summary, gender as an issue deserves greater attention than it currently receives in the context of Collective Kitchens. It should be acknowledged that Collective Kitchens are generally groups of women involved in food preparation for their families. Although these women are working within what has been a traditionally feminine sphere, recognition of the femaleness of their identities is a step towards their acknowledgment as subjects of action. Gender needs to be validated within Collective Kitchens. The development of authenticity requires overcoming the invisibility of gender; wholeness cannot be reached without open recognition of the importance of the gender of participants in Collective Kitchens.

Community as an issue

Community was generally understood by collaborators as either community of origin or community of residence. However, that community development was challenging was reported by the majority of collaborators. For example, Magenta viewed community development as particularly difficult in the area where Casa

Celeste was located. Furthermore, evidence from the literature suggests that community development could be problematic, and specially challenging for recent immigrants (Allmen, 1988; Jacob, 1994; Panet-Raymond, 1987).

The following quotes highlight two views that contradict each other but are two views of the same geographical community; while both could be valid, they illustrate the challenge of community development:

> "We feel, that when the City annexed this area, it was already in the mind of the planners to develop this area as a place for poor people, a place for people who are living in poverty...We have unemployment, we have crime, we have family violence. We have abused children, beaten women, we have alcohol abuse, and drugs..." (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 18).

> "...I see a community that from the outside and from a statistical perspective is one that's ripe with all these kinds of social ills that go along with people living in poverty...But, behind those stats are a lot of really wonderful people from a variety of ethnic background that have skills and have strengths...To me this community is a wonderful place with lots of wonderful people" (Casa Celeste, 1994b, p. 22).

Many concerns about community may be connected to an idealistic or abstract perception of the concept. Abstract approaches have favoured idyllic views of community; thus, community has been perceived as devoid of conflicts, or as if general consensus was the norm rather than the exception. However, challenges are numerous and while clarification is crucial, it has not always been pursued. Diversity of experience, which is always considerable, could be forgotten or unattended. Furthermore, challenges for community development could be expected to increase when the degree of diversity of experiences increases.

When the experiences of recent immigrants and/or people from varied ethnic backgrounds are included, as in this study, understanding the meaning of the concept of community becomes very challenging. As a result, concerns related to the geographical community, or people's area of residence, could become intertwined with concerns related to people's community of origin (Campfens, 1988b; Castex, 1994; Disman, 1988). Generally, this has been the result from the

dialogue with collaborators. In these circumstances clarification is required. Assumptions that immigrants from Third World countries are community oriented (Campfens, 1994) could obscure the fact that immigrants from countries quite different from Canada often find themselves with no community of origin to offer them support (Allmen, 1988; Jacob, 1994).

Often what is taken-for-granted as natural arrangements of society has resulted from organizational processes, which constructed these arrangements but, which have been obscured from view (Walker, 1990). In order to understand community the relation of the local, or lived experience of community, needs to be integrated with the external community or extra local; because it is frequently the extra local, that organizes or reorganizes people's lives geographically and emotionally (Walker, 1990). Attention to this, and personal reflection, could help people to realize that lives have been rarely organized with reference to communal concerns, but that they are generally structured by wage, commodity relations, and ideological forms (Walker, 1990).

Moreover, emotional satisfaction and fulfilment have been frequently relegated to the private realm or the home, which has had to compensate for the denial of human needs in the public realm, more generally centered in the service of profit. If welfare state provisions designed to relieve the household of excessive responsibility in the private realm are dismantled, more and more caring functions will fall to the family and particularly to women. However, women are already an important part of the volunteer network that is often represented by the term community (Panet-Raymond, 1987; Walker, 1990). For example, Walker (1990) notes:

> "...community is an ideological portmanteau word for a reactionary, conservative ideology that oppresses women by silently confining them to the private sphere without so much as even mentioning them..." (Walker, 1990. p. 42).

Often, the term community could be interpreted in direct contradiction to the interests of women. It is, because of this, that the term "community" is generally problematic and could be oppressive. Furthermore, when this term enters the political discourse devoid of any analytical framework of power, its meaning can be manipulated to fit any political agenda (Labonte, 1989, 1990). The result is that there are challenges related directly to the definition of community.

When controversies or contradictions about the concept of community are ignored, Collective Kitchens have the potential for contributing to the mystification of the concept. Care should be taken to ensure that Collective Kitchens do not encourage to oppression of those who, because of their role within the private sphere, have been historically identified with the concept of community. Women have worked in the neighbourhood, the home and the family, and their unpaid work has contributed to the development of their communities. Basic assumptions about community need to be questioned and examined carefully and openly, before community is embraced as an unproblematic solution to the local impact of current shifts in the economic and social system.

The socioeconomic issue

Collaborators discussed their concerns about changes in the provision of help and the state of the economy. They did not discuss, however, possible connections between the two or the relationship that could exist between economic and social transformations at local, national or international levels.

Concerns about the state of the economy, the cost of food and the cost of living, as well as concerns about employment availability were discussed by most collaborators. Particularly, the cost of food and the cost of living were mentioned as issues of concern to all of them. Food and living costs, however, affect some people in Canada more than they affect others. For example, while the top 20 per cent of families increased their share of the national income by 4.9 per cent in just four years,

from 1987-91, the bottom 60 per cent of families saw their income decline by 7.3 per cent in those same years (Campbell, 1993).

Inequality, or the gap between the upper and lower quintiles, is growing in Canada and work issues are also more dominant. Most collaborators were concerned with difficulties in finding paid employment, a concern that is also reflected within the literature (Gunderson et al., 1990; Kirwin 1994; Weinroth, 1994). Employment restructuring, within manufacturing and continuing to service employment, has been documented in both Canada and the United States (Bowen, Desimone & McKay, 1995; Gunderson et al., 1990; Voydanoff, 1991). Specific difficulties for immigrant women are documented in the following excerpt:

> "Women can be doubly disadvantaged when they are also members of groups such as Aboriginal people, racial minorities, or disabled persons -all of whom are disadvantaged in the labour market" (Gunderson et al., 1990, p. 104).

Growth in involuntary part time employment, particularly among women in low wage service jobs, in employment instability and in poverty levels have been documented in Canada and in other countries (Gunderson et al., 1990; McClelland, 1994; Voydanoff, 1991). The effects of these changes on people have also been discussed in the literature (Bowen et al., 1995; Johnson, 1995; Kieren, 1994; Mac Donald, 1993; Murphy, 1995; NAPO, 1994; Robinson, 1994).

The collaborators discussed concerns about changes in relation to the provision of help and these same concerns are also found in the literature. Women, particularly immigrant women, have been hurt as they are among the most vulnerable (Campfens, 1988b). Women in general, have been hurt by the reduction of funding for orientation programs that offered basic skill training and career counseling to people about to enter specific job oriented training (Gunderson et al.,1990). Labonte (1989) suggested that in the current climate of deregulation,

privatization and public sector retrenchment, when both the economic and social bases of Canadian society are been re-drawn, political analysis is required.

Most of the present ideas about the obligations of the nation-state were born relatively recently or only after World War II. It was mainly during this time that the state assumed responsibilities for social and educational programs. The nation-state became more like a social state and in varying degrees a guarantor of minimum standards for its citizens (Brooks, 1990; Swartz, 1987; Teeple, 1995; Tudiver, 1987). Structural changes accompanied by a policy of privatization of social services and cuts are currently favoured and these proposed cuts are not exclusively being promoted within Canada (Denis, 1995; Laxer, 1993; Patterson, 1987).

In the Third World, Chile was the first country to adopt the new economic policies. After the military coup of 1973 the "free marketeers," restructured Chilean society on a foundation of market forces with minimal state intervention. However, this structure has not solved the problems of a majority of Chileans (Quiroz, 1992). In Third World countries neoliberal structural adjustments have been encouraged, or pressured, by international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), previously known as GATT, in exchange for loan renewals in strongly indebted countries (Bello, 1994; Budhoo, 1994; George, 1994; Gershman, 1994; Quiroz, 1992). For example, Khor who is cited by Gershman reported that,

> "Structural adjustment is a mechanism to shift the burden of economic mismanagement and financial mismanagement from the North to the South, and from the Southern elites to the Southern communities and people." (M. Khor, Third World Network, cited by Gershman, 1994, p. 28).

By the mid seventies neoliberalism had become a distinctive world presence. The roots of neoliberal theory are described by Teeple (1995) in the following quote:

> "Neoliberalism as economic theory had a long period of gestation in the works of Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, and Milton Friedman, among others...Neoliberalism has increasingly come to appear as a set of ideas

> "whose time has come," while social democracy, trade unionism, and the Keynesian welfare state have begun to appear more and more anachronistic..." (Teeple, 1995, p. 2-3).

There is a globalization process, driven simultaneously by technological advances in computers, telecommunications and transportation; as well as, by corporate strategies and governments' domestic and foreign policies. A powerful laissez-faire ideology of deregulation, privatization and trade liberalization established its dominance within key centers of political power that include the WB, the IMF and the WTO, leaving keynessian economic management and the welfare state in "tatters" (Campbell, 1993).

Neoliberal policies are both the result and the cause of what is perceived as globalization (Campbell, 1993). While the WTO, the WB, the IMF and other similar agencies and representatives of capital apply pressure from without, national governments legislate neoliberal policies to free capital from social forms and political control from within, in both First and Third World countries (Bello, 1994; Budhoo, 1994; George, 1994; Gershman, 1994; Korten, 1994; Teeple, 1995).

Laxer (1993) called globalization an "hypothesis" that enabled conservative forces to implement changes that favour inequality, and hierarchy. The new conservative agenda received the name of revolutionary (Lisac, 1995; Today Tomorrow, 1995b). The need to shape up to be more competitive became dominant; and while competitiveness has become the "holy grail" of the conservative agenda, it is obvious that its true stepchild has been the politics of exclusion it encourages (Laxer, 1993).

The central metaphor of current changes is the market, perceived as the driving force of society. Its mythology includes a view of business entrepreneurs as warriors that ensure the creation of riches. At present, other members of society, generally perceived as of low value, must endure the sacrifices for the benefits to

come in the still unclear future (Laxer, 1993). Thus, the society as market metaphor has little room for those perceived as unproductive or for human compassion.

Public life is being privatized; important areas that in the past have been under government or public control are no longer recognized as core areas of government delivery. Society is moving from a model of citizens as participants, and from ethics of equality and collective good, to a model of people as market players, and capitalist ethics of inequality and private greed. People are not longer portrayed as citizens, with rights, but as consumers and/or investors in a private market place (Laxer, 1995). Budgetary cuts to social spending continue even in the face of budgetary surplus (Lisac, 1995; Murphy, 1995; Today Tomorrow, 1995a & 1995c).

Meanwhile, on the global arena a global financial market has reduced nation-states to virtual administrators who carry out the will of a global economic system. Supranationalization has weakened governments' abilities to manage the economy by validating the arguments in favour of having the state step aside. Supranationalization has eroded the public role in the economy and has favoured, as a self fulfilling prophecy, neoliberal ideology (Chodos et al., 1993).

Increasing social, political and economic globalization means that more than ever before, local action and understanding has to be situated within national and international action and understandings. In other words, community development must be both national and international in its scope to avoid reinforcing oppression. Community development has been criticized before for promoting integration of the poor and reinforcing rather than challenging conditions of oppression (Craig & Mayo, 1995).

Importantly, the success of community development does not depend exclusively upon internal variables, such as community conditions and dynamics, but it also depends on external variables. Political climate, availability of resources and

support for policies are crucial. Community development must acknowledge its limitations as a form of economic development in dealing with poverty at the local level and within a profit oriented society (Campfens, 1992; Campfens et al., 1992).

Collective Kitchens are portrayed as community development initiatives inspired by *Comedores Populares* of Peru. There have been exchanges between *Comedores Populares* and Collective Kitchens. As well, similarities can be noted between the Peruvian organization and the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec. Both are organizations with potential to inspire popular movements. The documentary entitled "Stir it up" (NFB, 1994) implies this potential by including images of popular rallies organized by *Comedores Populares* and other Peruvian organizations within the context of Collective Kitchens.

Cuba and Vattuone (1994) studied the impact of structural adjustment policies on the situation of women. They noted that the lack of information and understanding the women showed about neoliberal economy and its consequences for their daily life contributed to a situation of stress within *Comedores Populares* that was unhealthy for personal, group and organizational development. They argued in favour of increased awareness about structural issues among members, since this awareness could increase women's understanding and cooperation with each other.

The researchers' findings and recommendations have application within Collective Kitchens. The findings and reflections from this study are also applicable. They suggest that a similar perspective could benefit participants. Collaborators seemed unaware of global trends and policies that affect their lives. Opportunities for developing awareness and reflecting on macro level or global issues that affect people's lives, including the lives of participants within Collective Kitchens, should be encouraged.

The issue of culture

Most immigrants who have a native language other than English do not view learning English as a process separate from learning the ways of Canadian life. They tend to document their learning of the new culture by referring to the intertwining of their learnings of the new culture and language (Disman, 1988). As the number of immigrants from Third World countries has increased, it is increasingly important to consider both language and culture in order to encourage immigrants to gain inclusion (Boyd, 1992; Campfens, 1988b; Wilson, 1988).

Language, as argued, is not the same as culture but language may be a cue, or an indicator, as well as a cultural value in itself (Martinez, 1988; Street Chilman, 1993). Sharing the same language has advantages. Reaching agreement within Collective Kitchens, for example, could be facilitated when participants share a common language because communication becomes less challenging. Differences could be more easily negotiated to mutual advantage because sharing a common language often means that other similarities are also present.

In organizing Collective Kitchens with participants whose first language is not English, their level of English fluency should be considered because it takes time for immigrants to learn English. Some participants who feel comfortable with their English language fluency would welcome the opportunity to participate with English speaking women in Collective Kitchens. Therefore, Collective Kitchens have potential for encouraging valuable learning experiences that are not limited to food preparation but extend to include the development of quality relationships among members, solidarity and consciousness.

However, culturally mixed Collective Kitchens require both English fluency and cultural flexibility if they are to achieve those potentials. Challenges may present themselves because people are generally unaware of their own cultural values, although they may be quite perceptive about the values of others. Although culture

is an abstraction that comes from the past and touches every aspect of people's lives, personal awareness about cultural values can be taught because values can be subjected to clarification and reasoning (Herberg, 1988). Cultural awareness is best taught in an environment that is open and non judgmental. To be sensitive to cultural diversity is needed. Having an awareness of myths and stereotypes about people from varied backgrounds is very helpful (Hildreth & Sugawara, 1993).

Within Collective Kitchens, culture is generally understood in connection with food preferences, although it probably transcends this connection. Understood in the strictest sense of food preferences, Latin Americans' general dislike for frozen food could be the greatest challenge for Collective Kitchens. Dislike for frozen food is particularly problematic because participants in Collective Kitchens prepare food to be frozen and used later when needed.

There are benefits beyond food issues, connected to culture, that would encourage women from similar cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds to cook together within Collective Kitchens. The importance of children's food preferences, for instance, was often mentioned by collaborators. Perceptions of similarities with respect to collaborators' value of children's input about food encouraged them to feel better when participating in Collective Kitchens with other Latin American women. Most collaborators were positive that their children's food preferences should be considered and some shared a common perception that mainstream Canadian women did not see children's food preferences as crucial as they did.

However, without the intent to deny the accuracy of collaborators' perceptions, the researcher wants to add that food preferences of family members have been challenging for most Collective Kitchens. For example, Johanne Talbot in her interview (1995), referred to this challenge. In her view, it was particularly important to ensure that the food prepared within Collective Kitchens was

acceptable for the women and all their family members, or the women would be unlikely to continue participating in the groups.

Preparing food that is acceptable to younger children may be less problematic than preparing food for older children. In the case of Latin American women, male older children may be most difficult to please, particularly if the women come from a traditional background. The eldest male or the father may be reluctant to eat food that was not recently prepared and the male older children are likely to model his behaviour.

Concerns about women's participation in Collective Kitchens, however, are not only related to food concerns and/or concerns about culture. For example, a collaborator encountered opposition from her daughter who saw her mother's participation as a recognition of their poverty. In the daughter's view, Collective Kitchens were "a program for the poor." Although the connection between low income and Collective Kitchens is generally underplayed and often denied (Talbot, 1995), participation in Collective Kitchens may result in being stigmatized. Openly addressing concerns related to stigma attached to participation could contribute to demystify the issue while underplaying it could convey the message that poverty is the poor's fault and something to be ashamed of experiencing.

In summary, both language and culture should be considered in the context of Collective Kitchens. There are advantages for both culturally separate and culturally mixed Collective Kitchens. However, participants should be both able and willing to integrate into culturally mixed Collective Kitchens before they are likely to benefit from the Collective Kitchen. When these requirements are missing, experiences may be detrimental. Alienation, rather than integration, could be encouraged. Integration always implies mutual accommodation, where the dominant culture and mainstream institutions do not impose their criteria (Campfens, 1988b).

Food preferences and customs related to food preparation could be the greatest challenge Collective Kitchens encounter when participants from Third World countries are included. However, concerns related to participation transcend issues related to food and customs. Collective Kitchens may be experienced as stigmatizing when perceived as programs for the poor and dominant perceptions about the poor and poverty are not addressed but denied through silence. Denial to openly examine this issue could convey the message to participants that silence is best in dealing with poverty; thus, increasing personal shame. As noted previously, increased awareness, consciousness and understanding of larger societal issues could favour participants' emancipation.

In summary, within this chapter second level analysis findings and concerns were discussed. Formats of Collective Kitchens emerged that helped make explicit some implicit assumptions that could limit the potential of Collective Kitchens. It has been argued that forms of knowledge share similarities with the formats of Collective Kitchens that were discussed. Awareness about those similarities could contribute to the development of the potential of Collective Kitchens and to the quality of participants' experiences. Issues, which emerged from the dialogue with collaborators and relevant literature were also included. Recommendations related to the findings and issues are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

Recommendations

Five recommendations are suggested from the results of second level analysis. Second level analysis, as previously mentioned, involved examining the findings presented in Chapter Four, Findings, according to the ecological framework. Furthermore, relevant documents and literature were examined while the researcher's personal insights and understandings were also included. Within this chapter recommendations are made.

The first recommendation is related to the overriding theme that emerged from the findings which is the need for integration, reflection and increased dialogue within Collective Kitchens. The integration of formats with knowledge paradigms, borrowed from the education literature, is recommended. The second recommendation is related to gender. Sponsors, coordinators, participants and people generally involved with Collective Kitchens should become aware that Collective Kitchens could unintentionally favour traditional gender roles. Prevalent attitudes fail to encourage reflection and dialogue in relation to gender although gender is an integral characteristics of participants and strongly connected to the interests of Collective Kitchens.

Similarly, the third recommendation is related to the concept of community and the need to further reflect about it. Community is a confusing concept that has been traditionally connected to women's work and should be, because of this, carefully and openly examined. The fourth recommendation is related to the need for reflection and open dialogue about macro level or global changes. Globalization poses serious challenges to community development as an approach to social change. These challenges apply to Collective Kitchens because Collective Kitchens are understood as community development initiatives. Finally, the last or fifth

recommendation is related to cultural aspects, such as food preparation, within the context of language and cultural challenges.

Integrating emerging formats with forms of knowing

Integration of formats with forms of knowledge could encourage participants, coordinators and sponsors, or other people involved with Collective Kitchens, to perceive Collective Kitchens as potential opportunities for education. Thus, education literature related to knowledge paradigms became increasingly relevant to the discussion of Collective Kitchens. Once the relevancy of this literature was acknowledged, efforts towards the integration of the three forms of knowing in the context of Collective Kitchens could be favoured.

It is argued within this study, that it would be very valuable to think of technical knowing, or the teaching and learning of skills, in terms of knowledge that can be most helpful to participants, when participants themselves are involved in deciding what they need to know. Furthermore, it would also be valuable to think of interpretive knowledge, or the sharing of personal experiences and meanings, in terms of participants' possession of valuable personal knowledge that provides meanings for their experiences and affects their decisions in ways often unexamined. This would certainly increase the focus of Collective Kitchens on communication, understanding and on sharing of meanings.

Finally, it would be valuable to think of critical knowing within the context of Collective Kitchens. The discovery of underlying assumptions, interests and values, in terms of how participants' personal development has been influenced and/or sometimes limited by systemic structures, myths and assumptions can encourage participants' emancipation. If the focus of Collective Kitchens is on societal influences, the discrepancies between what is and what should be would increase. Thus, the need to integrate both personal development with increased knowledge and awareness about societal challenges (Morgaine, 1992b) is revealed.

However, Collective Kitchens as currently understood may generally be more concerned with technical knowing than with either situational or critical knowing (Talbot, 1995). This tendency reflects the focus of the Collective Kitchens Handbook (1992), a practical guide for implementing Collective Kitchens, which is also a very technical document. Issues related to the process or the development of the potential that Collective Kitchens could achieve are not favoured. Thus, educative models that incorporate group processes designed to equalize power relationships among participants and facilitator, meaningful facilitation and dialogue based on life experiences, need to be integrated or balanced within the context of Collective Kitchens.

Situational and critical knowing paradigms share some similar assumptions despite their varied concerns. Situational knowing, generally concerned with a focus on self awareness and personal enlightenment, is in itself the beginning of a critical orientation and the basis for authenticity. Critical knowing, generally more concerned with how structures limit individuals and their development, often relies on a departure from both experiences as personally understood and includes access to valuable technical knowledge. Morgaine (1992b) suggested that as discrepancies are considered, information or technical knowing could be helpful to illuminate historical, socioeconomic or cultural influences which have resulted in the discrepancies perceived. The separation of technical, situational and critical knowing seems artificial and could seriously limit the achievement of participants' personal authenticity and increased awareness.

The Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec, for example, holds orientation sessions for potential Collective Kitchen members. During these sessions women are encouraged to discuss their dreams and aspirations. Talbot (1995) noted that often dialogues were profound after participants were encouraged to share valuable personal insights. Often discussion of personal philosophies occurred.

Participants frequently shared some of their most profound wishes; wishes for a different society, a more egalitarian world, or a life less challenged by poverty concerns were often mentioned. This sharing among the women, generally encouraged the formation of Collective Kitchens that not only lasted longer but that were experienced by participants as more enjoyable (Talbot, 1995).

The development of trust among group members, the encouragement of authenticity and the provision of opportunities for dialogue, reflection and questioning could favour Collective Kitchens that encourage participants to remain aware, conscious and reflective. Reflection and meaningful sharing, as currently encouraged within some Collective Kitchens (Talbot, 1995), should be extended to occur more openly and frequently. This process cannot be limited to preparation or orientation sessions. Participants should always have opportunities to reflect and to question.

Questioning should depart from personal concerns and encourage reflection on socioeconomic, political and/or cultural challenges that affect participants lives. For example, the purpose of Collective Kitchens and the reasons that compel women to cook together within groups to ensure the provision of food for themselves and their families, could be a challenging but logical starting point for reflection that would encourage integration of forms of knowing within the context of Collective Kitchens, while attending to both personal and societal concerns.

Incorporating gender as an issue

As argued, gender is generally made invisible within Collective Kitchens; it is not directly acknowledged. This invisibility can further oppress women; its effects became more pervasive because it is unrecognized. In this study, the invisibility of gender was evident because only one collaborator discussed Collective Kitchens as the work of women who helped other women to learn; although, all collaborators and most Collective Kitchens' participants are women.

The question should be the following: What is wrong with acknowledging that Collective Kitchens are organized and provided by women? Failing to acknowledge what is obvious could favour the view that there is something wrong in recognizing that the gender of most Collective Kitchens' participants is female. Insistence on defining Collective Kitchens in gender neutral terms favours deception and it is in and of itself a negation of women's perceptions and work.

For example, the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec brings together Collective Kitchens from over Quebec and it is managed through an Administrative Council that is entirely women. Furthermore, the Coalition's documents mention a connection between Collective Kitchens and women but still maintain an ambivalent attitude about women, as the following quote indicates:

> "Women must know that they can transform their poverty and their living situation. Their discovery within the Collective Kitchens is not uniquely focused in managing poverty...people collectively in charge becomes a place to nourish reflection and to give a conscientization that encourages to act, within a mind frame of social transformation" (Regroupment des Cuisines Collectives du Quebec, 1994, p. 21).

Furthermore, when Collective Kitchens are defined within their documents, gender neutral terms are selected. Acknowledging the gender of the participants is crucial to the development of authenticity and wholeness. Collective Kitchens deal with traditionally feminine activities, such as food preparation and management, and they have the potential to either reinforce traditional orientations and expectations about women or to encourage women's emancipation and development. Women participating in Collective Kitchens may be increasingly vulnerable to understandings that reinforce notions that women's place is in the kitchen; however, a holistic understanding of human beings doesn't favour a view of women as persons confined to the domestic sphere.

Making gender invisible, in the hope that maybe Collective Kitchens would one day attract men, could be encouraging denial within and among female

participants, who are the majority. Such an approach lacks logic and could be seriously blocking the development of authenticity and wholeness among female participants. Gender should be openly addressed and opportunities for reflection should be provided because Collective Kitchens must help ensure that women are not further oppressed by expectations that they will manage, with limited resources and through food preparation, to overcome their poverty within Collective Kitchens.

Exploring the issue of community

Collective Kitchens have the potential to contribute to rebuilding the social fabric of communities (Talbot, 1995). Increasing understanding about the meaning of the concept community is needed. The term community is often problematic. It ould be questioned from a feminist perspective because of the historical connections between the development of community and women. The concept could also be questioned from an egalitarian perspective of society. The promotion of better redistribution of resources and power recognizes that community development is limited by unequal resource and power distribution (Campfens, 1992).

Collective Kitchens can either contribute to maintaining uncritical, abstract notions of community or they can make valuable contributions to new understandings of community development questioning myths and encouraging new practices. From a feminist perspective, overcoming myths about community requires that within Collective Kitchens, participants focus on the concept of community and its development. How is, or how should be, community understood? How could the current emphasis on community affect women? The concept of community, and community development, should not be uncritically accepted because both have potential for furthering the oppression of women.

From a feminist perspective the term community can be questioned because community has always been associated with the neighbourhood, the family, and therefore with the work of women. Non-critical community development may be

understood as cost effective solutions, rather than solutions that favour people. Community development may be perceived as desirable and appropriate because it is congruent with dominant concerns about the cost of social services. Low cost community development projects, including Collective Kitchens, may be encouraged, not because of their positive effects on people, but because they lower costs as they are generally implemented by the unpaid or volunteer work of women.

From an egalitarian perspective, a non critical approach to community development could further marginalize people with low resources or power through increased marginalization of low income residential areas or promotion of unfair expectations of ownership. For example, community ownership may be understood as a trend towards increased community responsibility, by which low income communities may be expected to be responsible for solutions without adequate provision of resources. In a sense, non-critical approaches have potential for shifting blame from individuals who are poor to poverty stricken communities. Communities that fail to assume responsibility by solving their problems, could be perceived as failures that do not deserve help and be abandoned.

Sponsors, coordinators and participants within Collective Kitchens should be aware about issues related to the concept of community and community development to ensure that their decisions and choices do not favour non-critical approaches. Such approaches would further marginalize and disempower people. It is more obvious today that communities are interdependent. Decisions affecting the lives of people in one area are taken generally far away from there. Inequality, ghettoization and oppression may be justified by a focus on community responsibility and ownership that fails to question non egalitarian resource distribution. Lack of awareness and discussion can contribute to the victimization of women, men and entire neighbourhoods perceived as lacking the ability to become self sufficient or to

thrive. While questions about how is community development limited by highly disruptive macro level forces may never be asked.

It is recommended that issues related to the concept of community and community development be considered within the context of Collective Kitchens; discussion and reflection are encouraged. Collective Kitchens are generally geared to low income participants; sponsors and coordinators should be particularly concerned with ensuring that concepts, perceptions and/or dominant ideologies do not further contribute to the oppression of low income women who participate in the groups. Magenta notes the situation in the following quote:

> "To me community is nothing...Much sadness, much poverty, many bad habits..." (Magenta 1, 4).

Understanding macro level challenges

The experience of Peru shows that despite the ability of people to adapt to the most adverse conditions, lack of awareness and understanding about socioeconomic processes affecting people's lives can contribute to oppression. The quality of human relationship and the development of friendship as well as solidarity can be affected by lack of awareness about macro level challenges. Awareness about disruptive macro level forces could contribute to people's political understanding and in turn encourage solidarity as a result of increased consciousness.

The utilization of an ecological framework to guide data collection, analysis and reporting in this study encouraged a holistic approach that contributed to increased awareness of micro and macro level challenges. Despite collaborator's awareness of important socioeconomic aspects that affected their lives, connections among those aspects and dominant economic, and/or political or ideological, trends were not discussed by them in this study or related to Collective Kitchens.

Nevertheless, Collective Kitchens have potential for increasing participants' understandings of macro level challenges. Departing from experienced reality, the possibilities to explore those experiences should be incorporated. Collective Kitchens, as other community development initiatives, need to increase scope and include national and international understandings. In the case of Collective Kitchens the possibility of an increased scope is particularly viable because of the historical connection with *Comedores Populares*, as well as, because the connection with the Coalition of Collective Kitchens of Quebec, which has potential for organization, is already present.

Increased understanding regarding effects of globalization trends, tendencies towards increased inequality, ideological acceptance of hierarchy and growing privatization of public life could contribute to the political awakening of participants within Collective Kitchens. Reflection on societal assumptions, values, and contradictions, as personally experienced by participants within Collective Kitchens, can encourage participants' increased understanding and development of feelings of emancipation and a critical approach to life. Marita notes the helplessness people may experience in the following quote:

> "People right now are blind isn't it? If they see it: what are they going to do? Where are we going to get more from? (Marita 2, 1).

Considering the issue of culture

Often, sponsors, in their eagerness to favour integration, may overlook substantial cultural differences. Thus, opportunities for Collective Kitchens that encourage or allow participants to use native language or groups that generally reflect participants' food and cultural preferences may not be promoted. However, with appropriate facilitation these groups can offer great potential.

Collective Kitchens could facilitate the integration of Latin American women to Canadian society. For example, women coming from often traditional

backgrounds, could perceive cooking in a group as an enjoyable, relaxing, and non-threatening. It could be valuable for immigrant women to have groups where they can develop with women from similar backgrounds until they are ready to join mainstream groups.

For immigrant women who feel secure enough to participate in culturally mixed Collective Kitchens, mainstream groups can be rewarding. Women at this stage need to further integrate to meet and know more about Canadians. Nevertheless, this step must be taken by immigrant women themselves, and not because options are not available. Awareness about cultural background is be a step towards authentic integration that requires language, knowledge and time. Collective Kitchens could offer immigrant women a non-threatening place for this as illustrated by Adelaida's quote.

> "And since we are here in Canada we should try to get along with other people. Trying to get along then...and contributing from our part; trying to understand other people. Because there is always that! One person has to begin from this side or from that side but always there must be a beginning! (Adelaida 1, 2).

Integration seems to me to be the dominant theme of my research. For example, integration appeared as a concern in the methodology selected, particularly through the development of an ecological framework that encouraged data from varied sources to be included as well as data analysis that intended to be holistic. I can see this overriding concern with integration reflected beyond the methodology selected and the reporting of findings. A concern with integrating formats to forms of knowledge as well as a concern with integrating the three forms of knowledge is discussed within Chapter Five, Discussion. All the recommendations made are variations of the integration theme itself.

Thus, where does this need for integration comes from? How am I reflected by it? How is it part of who I am? As an immigrant woman I have experienced the

dual vision to which Aoki (1978) so beautifully referred to as "the sakura and the rose," when discussing his own experiences as a Japanese Canadian. The need to make sense of a new reality without losing myself in it, remaining true to myself, or to the qualities and meanings that I believed I could not give up, is connected to this need to integrate that I perceive in this study.

Awareness about the multiplicity of experiences rooted my research, which needed to depart from the experiences that collaborators had of Collective Kitchens. My wish to provide an opportunity for the voices of Latin American women to express themselves became a reality, thanks to the existence of a group of Latin American women who had participated in Collective Kitchens. Collective Kitchens were the phenomenon studied in this research. I could not remain as an outsider in the research process; second level analysis allowed me to integrate the visions of collaborators with my own perspective.

Ecological conditions for the emergence of the potential of Collective Kitchens would always include people, both participants and coordinators. The crucial importance of coordinators should not be underestimated; coordinators need to be perceived as facilitators with capacity for encouraging participants' emancipation and empowerment.

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Appendix A

Information sheet, consent and demographic data

Information sheet

The purpose of this study is to learn about the experiences of Spanish-speaking women who participated or who participate in Collective Kitchens at Casa Celeste, Edmonton. I want to learn about participants thoughts and feelings regarding their Collective Kitchens experiences. This study is to fulfil the requirements for my degree.

I am a Spanish-speaking graduate student in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta. I will be interviewing women in their native language, Spanish. I am interested in talking with you about your experiences in Collective Kitchens. If you agree, the interviews will be taped on audio-cassettes. The stories you share with me will be kept private and confidential. Your names will not be used; and, you can select you own fictitious name. Nobody, besides myself, will listen to the tapes. The thesis committee may read part of the taped interviews. The results of the study may be presented at conferences, or published in research journals but your name will not be mentioned.

Talking about your experiences with Collective Kitchens is your choice. You are encouraged to share what you feel comfortable sharing. It may be beneficial to others to learn about the experiences of Spanish-speaking women from Latin America because little is known.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can call me, Nora Fernandez (492-5141) or Dr. Maryanne Doherty Poirier at (492-3922).

Consent/Consentimiento (Spanish version)

Experiencias de mujeres de habla espanola de origen Latinoamericano que han participado en Cocinas Colectivas, at Casa Celeste, Edmonton.

Este documento certifica que

Yo_____

participo de forma voluntaria en este projecto de investigacion. Entiendo los proposito de este estudio y lo que este estudio involucra. Todas mis preguntas han sido contestadas en una forma clara, que yo entiendo. Tambien se que cada entrevista va a ser grabada en cinta cassette por la investigadora. Se que puedo retirarme del estudio cuando lo desee. Si tengo alguna pregunta o preocupacion al respecto de este estudio, puedo contactarme con la investigadora, Nora Fernandez en el 492-5141 o 436-4096, o con su supervisora, Dra. Maryanne D. Poirier en el 492-3922.

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.....

.....

Si usted quiere recibir una copia del resumen sumario de este estudio una vez que este terminado, complete por favor la informacion que sigue y entreguemelo al final de la primera entrevista.

Nombre_____

Direccion_____

Background information sheet

Your age_____Date of arrival in Canada?_____Country of origin?_____

Education reached in home country_____

Number of children?_____ Married_____ Partner_____

Occupation in your home country?_____ For how long?_____

Have you worked since arrival?_____ Occupation(s)_____

Working full time?_____Part time_____Would you like to work?_____

Income $25,000 (gross) _____below _____above

Comfort with English? _____ _____ _____

Lots Somewhat None at all

Appendix B

Interview guide

Instructions to myself: for the first interview probes may be needed.

Introduction: Thanks for agreeing to be part of this study. I want you to remember that all the information and thoughts you share with me will remain confidential, private. I want you to share with me only what you feel comfortable sharing. I want you to focus on your experience with Collective Kitchens at Casa Celeste. I will need some background information from you, but I will ask this close to the end of the interview.

Main research question:
What can you tell me about your experience in Collective Kitchens at Casa Celeste?

Probes to be used in need:

A. About entering the program.

How did you find out about Collective Kitchens?

What decided you to participate?

B. Definitions of the program:

What is a Collective Kitchen?

What is the most important quality in Collective Kitchens for you?

C. Expectations about the program.

What did you expect from participating in Collective Kitchens?

Have your expectations about Collective Kitchens been fulfilled?

What expectation, if any, has not been fulfilled?

D. The strengths of the program.

Any good experience(s) about Collective Kitchens?

Has participation in Collective Kitchens affected your life in any way? If so, how?

E. The weaknesses of the program.

Did you find any barriers to your participation in Collective Kitchens? If so, which ones?

Any bad experience(s) about Collective Kitchens?

F. Change.

Anything you would change about Collective Kitchens? What?

Do you think that Spanish-speaking women have changed Collective Kitchens? How? Why?

G. Family reactions to participation in the program.

How did your family react to your participation in the program?

Have your family, husband/children encouraged you to attend?

H. Language and the program.

Is it important to do Spanish-speaking women Collective Kitchens? Why?

Have you attended Collective Kitchens with other English-speaking women? What can you tell me about this?

J. any area that the collaborator want to discuss.

Is there anything else that you want to include in your interview, about anything at all?

Ask background questions once the first interview is almost over. (have a sheet for participant to fill out and allow participant to fill it on her own if she wishes so.)

Conclusion:

I want to thank you for sharing all this information with me. Everything will remain confidential. I hope the experience has been positive. I will need to interview you again and there is a possibility that a third interview will be needed. Prior to the second interview I have to transcribe all the information and do some data analysis so we will have to arrange for a second meeting within the next two weeks. I hope you are enjoying the experience we are having and feel pride in sharing your knowledge with me. Do you have any questions?..

Thank you!

Appendix C

Stir It Up: document analysis.

i). Ambivalence between video's title and the image of cover.

a) Title: Stir It Up.

Meaning: more formal words for this expression are to disturb, to provoke, to incite, according to Collins Cobuild Dictionary of phrasal verbs, (1994) Sinclair (Ed.), London: Harper Collins Publishers.

b) Cover: three hands around a wooden spoon mixing the contents of an aluminum pot.

ii). Video order form.

Comments:

"An important resource for workers in Public Health, Social Assistance, Community Development and Church programs."

"Stir It Up is a documentary about, collective kitchens, a grassroots movement that nourishes the body and the spirit. It is a story of dignity in hard time and a testament to the possibilities of cooperative living."

"This, to me, is one of the finest solutions to the problem of hunger in the community." (Richard Fraser, collective kitchen participant, Montreal)

Price, length and producers:

price: $ 26.95 Time: 24 min. 16 sec. National Film Board of Canada, 1994.

Director: Lorna Thomas. Producer: Theresa Wynnyk.

iii). Style: Testimonial.

Throughout the video many people present their perspective about Collective Kitchens, the result is that many primary and secondary benefits for participants in Collective Kitchens are mentioned. This, however, may contribute to mystify the purpose of Collective Kitchens which appears as either unclear or multiple.

iv). Structure and time allotment.

1. Definitions from many perspectives: focus on the product, or inexpensive and nutritive food. Focus on learning skills, such as food preparation, shopping, and budgeting. Justification for Collective Kitchens: hunger/food an issue.
Program stage shown and discussed: planning (scene: Collective Kitchen groups).
Time allotment: approximately six minutes or 25 per cent of total video time.

2. Focus on secondary benefits such as overcoming isolation, and therapy.
Collective Kitchens as an alternative to food banks and vouchers, which are stigmatizing.
Program stage shown and discussed: shopping (longest time allotted) and cooking.
Scene: supermarket, actually Canadian Superstore.
Time allotment: approximately six minutes or 25 per cent of the total time.

3. Short mention of societal contradictions by a member of Coalition of C.K. of Quebec (Canada is a developed country, hunger should not be an issue but it is).
Collective Kitchens as more dignified alternative (from Mr. Strikland and Mr. Holmes).
Historical roots of Collective Kitchens discussed, the political, here/there (scene: Peru). Symbols: religious connotations: "breaking bread together."
Time allotment: approximately six minutes or 25 per cent of the total time.

4. Sharing soup: four Collective Kitchens (scene: Montreal, Edmonton, Waterloo, ESL).
Program stage shown: food distribution.
Diane Norman: about definition of hunger: "Hunger is not only economic but emotional" "Eliminating hunger: cornerstone of a better world." & "Peace and harmony. "Time allotment: approximately six minutes or 25 per cent of the total time.
Note: priority given in time allotment to planning stage.

Appendix D

Transcripts San Juan de Lurigancho Comedores Populares Union, Peru.

English transcripts are available from the researcher, upon request .

Appendix E

The Collective Kitchens Handbook(1992): document analysis

Percentages Ranking by page allocation.

Topic	Pages	Percentages	Ranking
General and Introduction:	6 pages	15 %	2
Planning	10 pages	25 %	1
Shopping	4 pages	10 %	4
Cooking	4 pages	10 %	4
Sharing the soup	1 page	2.5 %	6
Food distribution	1 page	2.5 %	6
Cleaning up	1 page	2.5 %	6
Safety/Hygiene	1 page	2.5 %	6
Recipes	5 pages	12.5 %	3
Sponsor information.	3 pages	7.5 %	5
Coordinator information.	1 page	2.5 %	6
Blank pages	3 pages	7.5 %	
Total pages	40 pages	100 %	

The Collective Kitchens Handbook (1992): document analysis

Analysis of the content.

i). Definition of Collective Kitchens.

A. Elements: small groups, people, pool knowledge, skills, energy and resources.

B. General objectives: to cultivate resourcefulness.

C. Specific objectives: to make low cost nutritious meals for their families; to learn and share information about low cost nutritious meals and to exchange shopping tips and healthy cooking methods; to develop skills that enable them to better meet the nutritional needs of their families.

ii). Method (HOW).

-in a supportive, fun atmosphere; working within a budget; in a group.

iii). Purpose or goals (WHAT).

A. Immediate Purpose. "Food is taken home and frozen so that nutritious meals are available during the last week of the month when money is particularly tight."

B. Over a bowl of soup, purpose: "They share the triumphs and mishaps of the day, as well as what is going on in their own lives."

C. Long term purpose: "opportunity to build a sense of community and to feel good about themselves!"

iv). Sponsor's role (WHERE)

"Help people in their community to help themselves."

v). Budgeting.

"participants prepare a grocery list and estimate cost of each item using flyers...If the choices exceed the budget (amount provided) the group works together to alter recipes or make substitutions for higher priced items....Everyone has the opportunity to learn how to shop from a list, and to make decisions at the store necessary to stay within budget."

vi). Target groups (WHO).

"Single parents, adults with mental health concerns and parents of low income families who could benefit from and contribute to a group cooking experience have been recruited."

vii). The need for Collective Kitchens (WHY).

"Effort of low income people to feed themselves and their families well are undermined."

-lack of knowledge regarding a healthy diet.
-family and emotional stress.
-isolation.
-poor health.
-limited food management skills: planning, budgeting, shopping, food preparation, knowledge that did not pass from one generation to the next.
-lack of time management skills
-lack of access to supermarkets due to lack of transportation and child care.

Note: Sponsors should be committed to community-based programming (p. 36).

viii). Coordinator.

Requirements: excellent communication and group skills, interest in food and nutrition, interest in community development, volunteer, provided by the sponsor.

Facilitation: "Coordinator must create a friendly safe and non-judgmental atmosphere and involve participants in the discussions and decisions that are made in the kitchen."

Learner-centred approach: "recognizes that people have knowledge, skills and resources to share with one another."

Evaluate asking questions: about what participants have learned from C.K.; about how the learning influenced their eating habits at home; about children like/dislike of the food prepared; about the impact of C.K. on weight, health, shopping and cooking habits; about whether participants would recommend C.K. to other people.